

GOAL! WEEKLY

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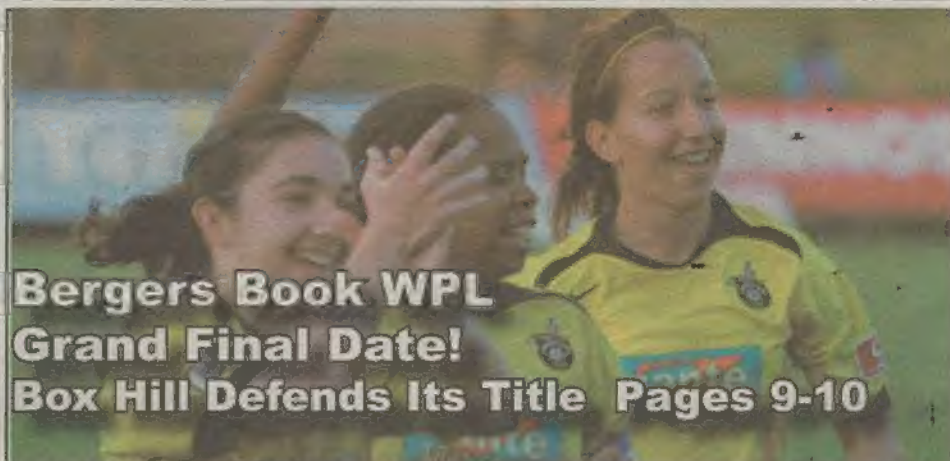
Supporting all colours and reporting in black and white.

4 Out Of 4 For Victory!

Melbourne undefeated
in A-League
Pages 14-17



Bergers Book WPL
Grand Final Date!
Box Hill Defends Its Title Pages 9-10



PLUS ▶ STATE LEAGUES - WOMEN'S - KRNCVIC - WORLD FOOTBALL AND MORE...

IT'S MAGIC V SOUTH!



Photo by John Punshon

ANTHONY MAGNACCA

2006 VODAFONE GOLD MEDAL

TANSEL BASER

ROLL OF HONOUR

2005 Anthony Magnacca Preston Lions 35 votes
2004 Doug Mladenovic & Ricky Diaco Magic, Pines 15 votes
2003 Chris Emovski Preston Lions 33 votes
2002 Jim Kourtis Bentleigh Greens 17 votes
2001 Chris Emovski & Zoran Todorovski Lions, Magic 21 votes
2000 Damian Wojtek St Albans Saints 21 votes
1999 George Jolevski Melbourne Raiders 26 votes
1998 George Jolevski Thomastown Zebras 31 votes
1997 George Jolevski Altona Magic 33 votes
1996 Ike Alagiozidis Bentleigh Greens 32 votes
1995 George Svigos & Tom Pondelljak Sharks & Saints 22 votes
1994 Josip Skoko & Nick Van Egmond Warriors & Dons 26 votes
1993 Steve Douglas Albion 38 votes
1992 Bogdan Bonk North Geelong 28 votes
1991 Fabio Incantalupo Bulleen 24 votes
1990 Claude Lucchesi Fawkner 48 votes

HENRY FA'ARADO

SASH BECVINOVSKI

JEFF FLEMMING

FERNANDO DEMORAES

FELIX ROSMAN

NICK SABLJAK

MANNY MUSCAT

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News Room: (03) 9645-1440
Advertising: (03) 9645-1440

news@goalweekly.com
mailbag@goalweekly.com
www.goalweekly.com

Editor: Costa Koutropoulos
Production: Carlos Ibarra and Michael Packowski

Contributors:

Mark Boro, Simon Chiarelli, George Cotsanis,
George Egonidis, Steven Gray, Nick Townsend,
Paul Jeffries, George Katsamboukas, Maria Katsidis,
Daryl Kennedy, Eddie Krnecvic, Jeremy O'Neil, Teo Pellizzeri,
Chris Piffis, George Stogiannou, Reuben Schembri, Richard
Suksmith, Adrian Ceddia, Bruno Zovko, Jason Gillick, Chris
Vernuccio, Markian Jaworsky

Photographers:

Daniel Ellis, Daryl Kennedy,
Phuc Pham, John Punshon, Steve Starek

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Get Ready to Go For Gold!

Tonight's the night! Get ready to roll out the red carpet as Victoria prepares to recognize its elite footballers and determine the Vodafone Gold Medal winner. Based on voting in a 3-2-1 system, this evening the best and fairest men's and women's footballer will be officially crowned for season 2006. In a strictly black tie affair at the Savoy Room, Grand Hyatt votes will be issued on a round by round, match by match basis until all 26 rounds are completed and a new winner revealed.

Goal! Weekly takes a look at who we think will be the front runners at the FFV's night of nights.

Anthony Magnacca (Preston Lions)

Last year's winner, Anthony Magnacca from the Preston Lions, looks set to be in the running for honours once again after producing another stand-out season even though his side just narrowly missed out on a place in the Top Six. Preston began the season towards the bottom of the table but shortly after Goran Lozanoski took over the reigns from Vlado Vanis at Connor Reserve the Lions made a tremendous surge up the table before falling agonizingly short on the last day of the season. Magnacca's silky skills always makes him the type of player that catches the eye, but if he is to go close, expect the votes to come during the second-half of the season.

Competition to retain the award will no doubt be close, and may not be decided until a climactic last round of the home and away contests. If that's the case then it may well be a case of having to loosen the bow tie, grab another chardy and watch in suspense as the drama unfolds.

Sash Becvinovski (Altona Magic)

Altona Magic's Sasha Becvinovski has the potential of capping off a marvelous year with sweeping away with all before him. The legendary marksman has already taken out the 2006 Top Goalscorer Award by pipping last season's winner, Kingston City's Michael Curcija, with 17 goals, and can also look forward to a Grand Final date with South Melbourne this Sunday. A favourable turn of events tonight could see Sash on his way to achieving a memorable hat-trick of a different kind. The fact that his proficiency in front of goals helped Magic to 2nd place on the table could mean that Sash may be further rewarded for his hard work around the penalty area.

Felix Rosman (Oakleigh Cannons)

One of the best defenders in the competition who has lead by example on and off the field is Oakleigh Cannons' captain, Felix Rosman. The towering stopper has organized his troops admirably this year, leading the Cannons to a runaway Minor Championship and only conceding 24 goals all year - second best record only by one goal to the Magic. Whilst attacking flair in sporadic bursts can sometimes grab the lion's share of the votes, Rosman has been the epitome of consistency in the heart of the Jack Edwards Reserve defence and may well be the dark horse that salvages something from a season which promised so much.

Fernando De Moraes (South Melbourne)

One of the league's most exciting players Fernando De Moraes will surely figure predominately amongst the leader's board. The Brazilian midfielder again added spice to the South Melbourne line-up and the Vodafone Cup this season. His close control and quick footwork makes him a pleasure to watch and the influence of Futsal is certainly evident in his game. The fact that he missed a handful of games when he pursued trials at Queensland Roar and in Greece during the season may leave him left wanting for crucial votes when the final votes are tallied up.

Henry Fa'arodo (Essendon Royals)

Solomon Island international Henry Fa'arodo was instrumental in assisting Essendon Royals escape the drop, when against the odds and seemingly anchored to the bottom of the ladder, it won its final two games of the year to pull off one of the great escapes in the competition's history. The former Perth Glory forward often led the charge up front, using his pace to harass opposition defensive lines and was regularly involved in intelligent build-up play. Perhaps didn't test goalkeepers and punish defenders as often as he would have liked, but Henry should still poll well in a team that struggled for most of the year.

Nick Sahlijack (Heidelberg United)

The 26 year old Heidelberg United midfielder has had a stellar season for the Olympic Village outfit figuring prominently in the clubs tilt at glory this year. The former NSL star who had stints at Adelaide City, South Melbourne and Wollongong Wolves is as competitive as they get, always giving his all and not afraid to speak his mind to voice his opinion to team-mates and opposition alike. Has matured as a player and could well take out the league's most coveted individual prize.

Jeff Flemming (Green Gully)

The underrated New Zealand international has been one of the essential cogs in the Green Gully machine for the past few seasons. A championship winner last year with the Cavaliers, Flemming goes about his business complementing the playmakers in the side with his unselfish play and undisputed commitment. An ideal squad member and the type of player who is never afraid to do the hard graft. His efforts normally go unnoticed, but are imperative to keeping the balance in the whole side.

Last year's
winner Anthony
Magnacca has
a chance to go
back to back
tonight



Tansel Baser (South Melbourne)

The former U20 Australian international returned to the Blues after spending eight years as a professional in Turkey. Baser took over the mantle from the departed Kostas Salapadidis as the main man to stamp authority in the South Melbourne engine room. A solid performer who doesn't hide when the tempo increases, Baser has added an edge to Johnny Anastasiadis' team, providing the ingredient which promises to take the Bob Jane outfit a step further than the previous season.

Many Muscat (Sunshine Georgies)

The ever present Sunshine Georgies captain was unfortunately unable to prevent his side from going down on the last game of the season however Muscat has been one of the shining lights at Chaplin Reserve in 2006. A product of the impressive youth program who wears the armband and the red and white strip with great pride. Contributed with 4 goals and could possibly become the first Georgie to take out the Gold Medal since the legendary John Gardiner completed consecutive success in 1971 and 1972.

Other categories to be decided this evening include:
Women's Gold Medal, Coach of the Year, Bill Flemming Medal, Top Goalscorer, Goalkeeper of the Year, Referee of the Year, Under 21 Player of the Year and the Weinstein Medal for best junior talent.

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Monday 11 September

vodafone

VODAFONE CUP

DETAILS



FINALS SERIES SCOREBOARD

PRELIMINARY FINAL

ALTONA MAGIC 2 - 1 HEIDELBERG UNITED

Goals: D.Vasilevski (AM) 4th, J.Tricarico (HU) 89th, K.Delev (AM) 98th.
Cautions: Details unavailable at time of going to press.

Magic: B.Jevdevic, S.Mrkela, L.Osman, D.Mladenovic, K.Delev, S.Becvinovski, T.Razov (A.Sherifovski 65th), I.Arsovski (S.Zilic 75th), P.Cergovski, I.razov, D.Vasilevski.

Bergers: L.Acevski, D.Jones, T.Ouliaris, R.Liparotti, E.Vasiliadis (D.Barakat 86th), J.Tricarico, A.Vlahos, A.Gjuni, S.Petrovic, L.Tsoumerkis (J.Drossos 64th), J.Groenwald (HT N.Marinos).



LEADING GOALSCORERS

Sash Becvinovski
Altona Magic FC 17

Michael Curcija
Kingston City FC 16

James Robinson
Richmond Eagles FC 13

Esala Masi
Oakleigh Cannons FC 12

Mark Tsiorlas
Fawkner/Whittlesea 12

Anthony Magnacca
Preston Lions 11

VODAFONE CUP TABLE- Final Standings

	P	W	D	L	F	A	PTS
Oakleigh Cannons	26	16	7	3	47	24	55
Altona Magic	26	12	7	7	32	23	43
South Melbourne	26	12	6	8	45	28	42
Heidelberg Utd	26	12	5	9	43	36	41
Kingston City	26	11	5	10	37	39	38
Green Gully	26	10	7	9	45	40	37
Preston Lions	26	10	7	9	45	46	37
Richmond Eagles	26	9	8	9	41	38	35
Bulleen Zebras	26	9	6	11	27	36	33
Fawkner-Whittlesea	26	10	1	15	38	51	31
Essendon Royals	26	8	6	12	32	37	30
Melbourne Knights	26	8	6	12	33	39	30
Sunshine Georgies	26	8	6	12	30	36	30
Frankston Pines	26	6	5	15	23	45	23

The Final Six



Week 1

Qualifying Final

Oakleigh Cannons 0
v
Altona Magic 2
Bob Jane Stadium
Sunday, 03 Sept

Elimination Finals

South Melbourne 3
v
Green Gully 0
Bob Jane Stadium
Friday, 01 Sept

Heidelberg United 5
v
Kingston City 1
Knights Stadium
Sunday, 03 Sept

Week 2

2nd Semi-Final

Altona 1 - 2 South
Knights Stadium,
Sunday 10 Sept

Winner goes straight to Grand Final
Loser goes to Preliminary Final

1st Semi-Final

Oakleigh 0 - 1 Bergers
Bob Jane Stadium
Friday, 08 Sept

Loser is Eliminated

Week 3

Preliminary Final

Altona 2 - 1 Heidelberg
Bob Jane Stadium
Sunday 17th Sep

Winner goes to Grand Final
Loser is Eliminated

Week 4

Grand Final



South Melbourne



Champions



Altona Magic

VODAFONE CUP
The Finals

GOAL! WEEKLY AWARDS

THE 2006 VODAFONE CUP SEASON HAS ALMOST FOUND ITS CHAMPIONS
NOW IT'S TIME FOR THE PEOPLE TO CROWN THEIR CHAMPION
BY VOTING IN THE GOAL! WEEKLY 2006 AWARDS.

WHILE THERE CAN ONLY ONE TEAM THAT TAKES AWAY THE CUP, THE
ANNUAL GOAL! WEEKLY AWARDS IS OFFERING THE FANS TO CHOOSE
WHICH PLAYERS STOOD OUT FROM THE REST.

CATEGORIES INCLUDE MEN'S PLAYER OF THE YEAR, WOMEN'S PLAYER OF THE YEAR,
RISING STAR, COACH OF THE YEAR, REFEREE OF THE YEAR,
AND TEAM OF THE YEAR AWARD.

Goal! Weekly 2006 Awards

Men's Player of the Year
Women's Player of the Year
Rising Star Award
Coach of the Year
Referee of the Year
Team of the Year

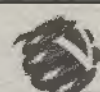
How to Vote

It's simple to vote. Nominate any person in the Vodafone Cup in their respective categories and send it in to Goal!Weekly at PO Box 142 Port Melbourne 3207 or email us at GWawards@goalweekly.com



VODAFONE CUP

The Finals



OLE! KOLE PUTS MAGIC INTO FINAL

PRELIMINARY FINAL DECIDED IN EXTRA TIME



Heidelberg United Warriors 1 - 2 Altona Magic FC

Altona Magic defender Kole Delev headed his team into the Vodafone Cup grand final, with an extra time goal in a 2-1 Preliminary final victory over Heidelberg United on Saturday evening at Bob Jane Stadium.

The result ensures that at least one of the top two teams over the home and away season, will take part in the final.

Heidelberg went into the game without the suspended Nick Sabljak, the injured Peter Roberts and with striker Nick Marinos under an injury cloud, starting on the bench. Unsurprisingly, coach Pappas decided on a conservative formation with Joe Tricarico playing as the lone striker.

The Magic were without the services of Alfonso Opazo, with Igor Arsofski replacing him in the starting eleven.

A crowd of just 1,386 had just settled into their seats when the Bergers' Andy Vlahos almost fired his side into an early lead with a near post shot on the end of a Tricarico cross. A couple of minutes later, Magic midfielder Daniel Vasilevski put his side in front when he shot past a wrong-footed Lupce Acevski following a cross from the left hand by-line.

Heidelberg struggled to settle into the game during the first half, looking disjointed in possession and uncertain going forward against a well organized and disciplined Magic team. Go-to man, Andy Vlahos, was closely marshaled by Magic's Ivan Razov who

gave him little time and space on the ball.

The few chances in the remainder of the first half fell to the Magic. Defender Levent Osman's header from a corner flashed wide of the Bergers' goal and Becvinovski thundered a free kick at goal which Heidelberg keeper Acevski did well to save.

The Bergers' ineffectiveness in attack meant coach Pappas had little choice but to start with Marinos alongside Tricarico in the second half.

With the Magic defending deeper, Heidelberg enjoyed a greater share of possession and were more fluent in their passing and movement of the ball in transition from defense to attack. Marinos had two or three chances to head the ball at goal, but his timing was slightly off. Tricarico also had an early headed chance which flashed over the bar. For the Magic, Becvinovski looked set to fire in his side's second however he skewed a left foot volley away from the goal, back towards the crosser. Coach Vlado Torteovski, introduced the speedy Agim Sherifovski in place of Tomi Razov in the 65th minute and shortly after, freshened his attack further with Stanko Zilic coming on for Arsofski.

With full time looming, Bergers' midfielder Sebastian Petrovich threaded a pass aimed at Tricarico on the edge of the box. Without touching the ball, the striker produced a sharp pirouette, allowing the ball to run behind him, and with a burst of pace, managed to reach the ball and flick it past an advancing

Bojo Jevdevic into the Altona goal for the Bergers' equalizer.

Controversy followed soon after at the other end of the park, when Magic's Becvinovski beat his marker to convert a Doug Maladenovic free kick. As the striker ran towards the grandstand holding his arms aloft in celebration at what he thought was a perfectly legitimate goal, his joy turned to disbelief as a linesman's flag signaled an off-side infringement, a decision which left the normally unflappable Magic coach Torteovski fuming on the sidelines.

The Bergers had a couple of good chances to score early in extra time through Tricarico and another mistimed header to Marinos. However they found themselves 2-1 down in the eighth minute of extra time when Magic sub, Sherifovski's in-swinging free kick from the right flank, lured keeper Acevski off his line. The Bergers' keeper was unable to get to the cross before Kole Delev who headed home the winner.

By George Stogiannou

Photos by Daniel Fils and John Punshon

What the Coaches Said...

Con Pappas

Coach, Heidelberg Utd:

Obviously we were very disappointed. I don't think we were the worst team on the night, to lose like that with only a couple of minutes before going to a penalty shoot-out is a bit hard to take, but congratulations to Altona and all the best to them. All credit to my players for their fighting spirit and desire, a few of our players were a bit underdone and I suppose we just ran out of legs. The next goal would have won the match, they got it, we didn't and that's it. In the end it was a good season to finish third.

Vlado Torteovski

Coach, Altona Magic:

It was a very exciting game and we are very happy to have won even though it went to extra time. Heidelberg played a very good game, but I'm very happy for my boys. Every single player gave 100% and their response was terrific. We're not celebrating yet because there is obviously one more game to go and we hope we can keep things going for the big one against south Melbourne. That's the only game that counts for us right now.

Man of the Match
Doug Maladenovic
(Magic)

Not long now boys!
Magic players celebrate
the winner that puts
them into this week's
Grand Final

Below: An ecstatic
Vlado Torteovski gives
big Doug Maladenovic a
celebratory hug



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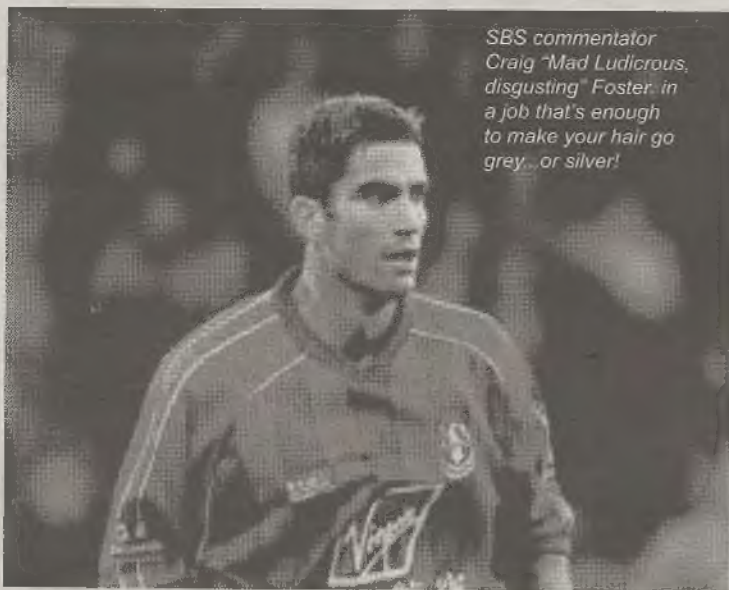
VODAFONE CUP The Finals

Monday 11 September



BOO'S WORLD

A satirical look at the World of Football according to Mark Boric



SBS commentator Craig "Mad Ludicrous, disgusting" Foster, in a job that's enough to make your hair go grey...or silver!

Harry Kewell has had enough of the British National Health Service and has returned to Australia to get treatment for his injury. Expect him to come good for Cup Finals time. Don't expect him to complete a full game then, though.

Sydney FC are trialing Benito Carbone. As Bernie Fraser may have said in an old ad for superannuation, "Sydney FC is the super of the future!" Everyone who had five minutes of fame in the EPL or Serie A once will be trying to sign up for it.

Frank Farina may read this column, he's picked up on my claims that Craig Foster has gone mad. That or he can just tell that Craig Foster has gone mad, declaring some of his recent calls as "ludicrous and disgusting".

Southern Stars defeated Keilor Park in the first part of the Division One play-off, facing Bentleigh Greens for the final Division One spot next week. Once again South East had triumphed over North West.

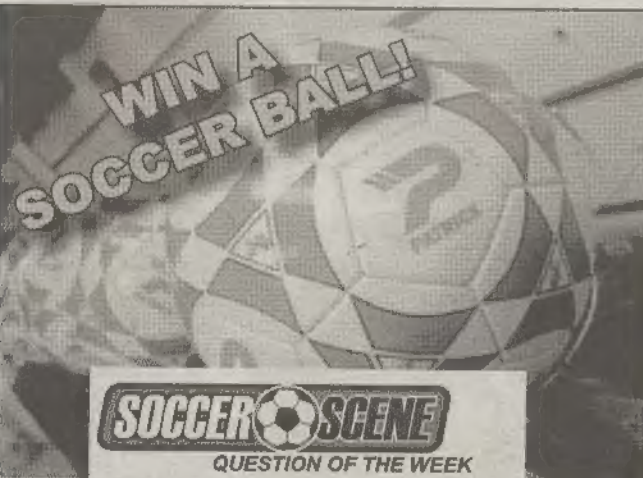
A little bit of shuffling around may have to occur in State League Division Two next season as the North West side is becoming a little top heavy. Clifton Hill and Diamond Valley United are probably already geographically displaced in the SE, and may soon be joined by one of Altona East or Northcote City.

Until next week, this isn't Katsa, not as you know him. When the fat lady sings, I hope she doesn't fall over.

The A-League picture is already pretty clear. Adelaide United will be right up there again. Queensland Roar and Melbourne Victory are the improvers and look certain finalists. Sydney FC should be in contention, though they may need to do some shonky salary cap work to cement a finals spot with a challenge from Central Coast Mariners. Perth Glory will probably be next with Newcastle Jets and the New Zealand Knights providing the comedy relief.

Paul Trimboli did a good job on Foxtel's coverage of the Adelaide United v Perth Glory game. Doubt that he will be allowed to cover any Melbourne Victory games though, judging by some of his less than unbiased calls of their games on Radio SEN with Michael Zappone. The ultimate in biased commentary would occur if he was to work on this week's Vodafone Cup Grand Final.

The Vodafone Cup has come down to South Melbourne versus Altona Magic. It's been a while since South won a Victorian Championship, 1976 to be exact. Sure they were distracted by bigger things for a while, but they are overdue.



Thanks to Melbourne's newest soccer depot, Soccer Scene, Goal! Weekly will be giving away a Patrick soccer ball each week to the first correct entry of the Soccer Scene

"Question of the Week."

This week's question is:

Who scored the winner for Victory against the Mariners in Yesterday's Match?

Send in your entry today to:
competition@goalweekly.com

A QUESTION OF SPORT

- 1/ Who won last year's Gold Medal?
- 2/ With which NSW club did Sydney FC's Steve Corica make his name in the NSL?
- 3/ How many times has Spanish giants real madrid won the Champions League/European Cup?
- 4/ In the 2005 FIFA World Club Championship what position did Sydney FC finish the tournament?
- 5/ True or false? Melbourne Victory's Adrian Leijer was born in the NSW town of Dubbo.
- 6/ Who holds the record for scoring the most goals for the Socceroos? A) John Kosmina B) Graham Arnold C) Attila Abonyi D) Damian Mori
- 7/ When was the last time Altona Magic won the Victorian Premier League?
- 8/ Melbourne Victory's Grant Brebner served an apprenticeship with which English Premier League club?
- 9/ Socceroo Marco Bresciano moved from Parma to which other Serie A club?
- 10/ Sydney FC coach Terry Butcher represented England at how many World Cups?

Refer to question 6



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ON THE BOX

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The Green Gully Soccer Show
Channel 31
Saturdays, 10.30am

The World Game
SBS
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EPL Live - Man Utd v Arsenal
Tuesday 1am on Fox 1

A-league Live - NZ Knights v Sydney
Thursday 6pm on Fox 2

EPL Live - Liverpool v Tottenham
Friday 5am on Fox 1

A-league Live - QLD Roar v Adelaide
Friday 7.30pm on Fox 1

A-league Live - Mariners v Jets
Saturday 7pm on Fox 1

A-league Live - Glory v Victory
Sunday 5pm on Fox

ON THE AIRWAVES

The 90th Minute
SEN 1116
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With Michael Zappone and
former Socceroo legend
Paul Trimboli.

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QUIZ ANSWERS

1. Preston's Anthony Magriacosa
2. Marco
3. Nine times
4. 10
5. True
6. Kosmina scored 42 times, while Abonyi scored 36 goals, Arnold 34 goals and Mori 29
7. 1997
8. Manchester United
9. Palermo
10. Three times (1982, 1986 & 1990)



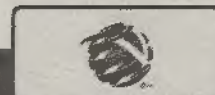
Issue #31

The 90th Minute - SEN 1116
Every Sunday 5pm Onwards
With Michael Zappone and Paul Trimboli





STATE LEAGUES



Bentleigh Fights To Stay Up



Bentleigh in action earlier in the year

In front of a vocal crowd at the Anderson Reserve, home of Doncaster Rovers, Division 2SE runners up Southern Stars booked themselves a ticket to Port Melbourne to tackle tenth place Division one side Bentleigh Greens for the one remaining Division One spot.

In a game which was played before a decent crowd made up largely of supporters from the Turkish community supporting southern stars they were treated to a tense but exciting contest in which extra time was needed to determine who would advance to next weeks game. Both teams started out tense and it was Keilor who had the better of the contest and who took the lead only for Sercan Doganay to equalize and send the game into extra period which Southern Stars dominated and were rewarded when Thierry Boi scored the goal that took the side from the south east into the play-off final.

Lets take a look at the two sides who will be contesting next weeks game

Bentleigh Greens

2006 Position: 10th in Division One
2006 Record: Played 22 Won 5 Drawn 8 Lost 9 Goals For 24 Goals Against 28 Points 23
Last 5 Games: LWDDW (8 Points from a possible 15)
Top Scorers: Ben Coggar 7, Christopher Driver 4, Two players on 3

Bentleigh will be desperate to win this game to maintain their status in Division One and to avoid a further slide down the Victoria soccer hierarchy, remember they were relegated from the 2005 VPL and would not want to go down in 2006 as well. Bentleigh didn't concede many goals in 2006 but their problem was scoring goals consistently and being able to turn close draws into wins and losses into points. They will need a big big effort from every one of their players if they are to stave off the southern stars.

Southern Stars

2006 Position: 2nd in Division Two South East
2006 Record: Played 22 Won 13 Drawn 3 Lost 6 Goals For 38 Goals Against 26 Points 42
Last 6 Games: LDWWLW (7 Points from a possible 15 plus the playoff win)
Top Scorers: Sercan Daganay 8, Sinan Aydogan 7, Thierry Boi 6

The Stars will be on a high from their first round playoff win and the crowd which was at Anderson Park will go into the game with nothing to loose and everything to gain. I think where their advantage will come is the crowd and that they have goal scorers all over the park and they will be able to play without pressure where the greens will have everything to

loose.

My Prediction is that the game will be tense and tight at first but I think the Southern stars will have what it takes to upend the greens and take their spot in division one for 2007. Southern Stars 3 Greens 1 is my prediction.

By Reuben Schembri



PLAY
OFFS

PLAY-OFF DETAILS

Bentleigh Green
v
Southern Stars

SS Anderson Reserve,
Port Melbourne
Saturday 23 Sep
KO 3pm

Winner of above match
plays in State League
One next year

FOR THE LATEST VODAFONE CUP PHOTOS VISIT

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Danny's Photo

Monday 11 September



Our boys only lost 5-0 this week

The soccer pools paid off

Son's hatrick scoring performance

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WOMEN'S PREMIER LEAGUE

The Finals



Won With The Lot For Bergrers!

Next weekend's Vodafone WPL Grand Final will pit Heidelberg United against Box Hill Inter, after the former mounted a strong second half display to overcome Ashburton in the preliminary final at Bob Jane Stadium on Saturday.

As has so often been the case throughout this finals series, the first half ended goalless, with neither side able to find the decisive breakthrough required to take the lead. Heidelberg United had the better of the play, but a lack of clinical finishing in front of goal prevented it from capitalising on the advantage, as restricted Ashburton to only one real scoring opportunity.

The second half proved the difference, with last weekend's extra time heroine Meghan Archer once again finding the breakthrough to give Heidelberg the lead. The match remained delicately poised, before Heidelberg put the matter beyond doubt and guaranteed its progression to a first Grand Final with an injury time penalty.

The result sets up an intriguing Grand Final encounter between Box Hill Inter and Heidelberg. Inter is looking for its fourth straight title, and to continue its domination of the competition since the finals system was introduced. As things stand, Inter has never been defeated in a Grand Final, and form suggests that United's job will be even harder, given that it suffered defeat both times that the sides met during the regular season. However, Heidelberg, which has gone from strength to strength all season after several disappointing years, proved in the Preliminary Final that it would not be overawed by

supposedly more fancied opposition, and so supporters should be in for a real spectacle next weekend.

While the action may be continuing in the WPL for another week at least, the dust has now settled on another season in the State leagues, allowing a chance to reflect on the promoted and relegated teams across the women's competitions.

After disappointing seasons, Brimbank and South Melbourne will start next year in State League 1, and their places in the top flight will be taken by the University of Melbourne and regional side WVSA. Both teams performed impressively in the second tier competition, with the University completing the season with a flawless record, having played eighteen matches for eighteen victories, which it will be hoping sets it up for a more successful WPL campaign than its inaugural attempt in 2005. WVSA's success is further evidence of the growth of the sport, as sides from outside Melbourne continue to make inroads into the top flight. It had a record only slightly inferior to that of the University, winning sixteen matches, and dropping points only in its two encounters with the top side. At the other end of the ladder, Melton and Waverley Wanderers ended the year in the drop zone, with the Wanderers in particular finding the going extremely tough, and both will retire to State League 2 next year.

The University of Melbourne's success was not limited to State League 1, as a second of its teams also romped to the title in State League 2 NW, again finishing the season undefeated, albeit including three draws

in its sixteen games. It was an impressive eleven points ahead of its closest challenger, Avondale Heights. Another university fared less well than Melbourne, with cross-town rivals La Trobe University ending the year at the foot of the ladder, having failed to win a match all year.

Gippsland's success in State League 2 SE highlights once again the increasing strength in regional women's clubs, and 2007 will see four regional sides feature in the top two divisions. As seems to be the trend in the leagues below the WPL, Gippsland completed its season undefeated, to take the title by a comfortable eighteen points. Monash University did unfortunately not enjoy such a successful season, finishing bottom of the ladder with just two wins and two draws for the year, and hence will drop to State League 3. Ashburton, for all its success in the WPL, also found the going tough, finishing just two points above Monash.

Whilst it has long been a force to be reckoned with in the men's competitions, Bentleigh Greens has never enjoyed the same success with its women's teams, but that could be changing if results in State League 3 SE are anything to go by. Bentleigh raced away to the title, winning fifteen matches and losing just once as it comfortably won promotion ahead of second-placed Beaumaris. Having finished bottom in State League 2 SE, Monash University's troubles continued in the league directly below, as it also ended the year at the foot of the ladder, two points behind Brighton.

State League 3 NW provided success for Brunswick

Zebbras, which ran away with the league, finishing the season with just two defeats from sixteen games, and taking the title from Whittlesea Stallions by a clear nine points. It proved a torrid year for Mill Park in the same competition though, as it shumped to defeat in all sixteen of its matches, and it will no doubt be glad to have reached the season's end. Elwood City finished one place above Mill Park, but at least with the satisfaction of having chalked up three wins and two draws during its campaign.

The ever increasing expansion of the women's game saw State League 4 splinter into three separate competitions this year. In the NW division, the intriguingly named Melbourne Bears triumphed, winning thirteen of its sixteen games to finish ahead of Eltham North. Maribymong United had the inglorious honour of ending the year at the bottom of the women's leagues, mustering up a total of two draws during the course of its season. Bayswater Strikers led the way in State League 4 SE, with Brighton finishing at the opposite end of the ladder, after failing to record a point. The Metro competition enabled Berwick to claim the title, as it completed the season undefeated, dropping points in just two matches. Brighton's woes were also apparent in this version of the division, as its other team also finished bottom of the ladder, again without troubling the points tally.

By Niki Cook

Photo by John Punshon



L-R: Angie Rassias, Jamara Maza & Rita Mankowska celebrate Heidelberg's win



WPL GRAND FINAL

BOX HILL INTER V HEIDELBERG UNITED

Bob Jane Stadium

Sunday 24th September, KO 12pm



Monday 11 September

Bergers Book Grand Final Date



Stacey Louras (left) battles with Belinda Pannella

Heidelberg United advanced to its first Vodafone Women's Premier League Grand Final after defeating Ashburton 2-0 at Bob Jane Stadium on Saturday.

Second half goals to Meaghan Archer and Melissa Frankcombe were just reward for an authoritative display by United, which had lost all three meetings against Ashburton this year - most recently on

penalties in the first week of the finals.

In truth, the scoreline flattered Ashburton, which seemed a shadow of the side that racked up a league-high 92 goals on its way to losing only one game all season.

Ashburton had the better of the opening 10 minutes, going close with an Amy Jackson strike which cleared the bar, and pinning United into its own half.

But from thereon, Heidelberg clicked into gear and created a hatful of opportunities from which it was unlucky not to score.

Belinda Pannella was particularly wasteful up front, frittering away at least four good first-half chances.

Her first came on 11 minutes, when she failed to capitalise on a fumble by goalkeeper Antoinette Santacaterina which left the goal-mouth wide open - the Ashburton custodian recovering brilliantly to get back quickly and snuff out the striker's prodded effort.

10 minutes later, Jamara Maza split the defence with a well-weighted through-ball, but Santacaterina was once again at the top of her game to block Pannella's goal-bound strike, and was relieved when the striker's follow-up sailed over the bar.

Emma Minde drew another save from Santacaterina before just failing to nod home a dangerous free kick floated in by Frankcombe.

On 40 minutes, Archer's cross picked out Pannella in the 6-yard box.

The striker did well to bring the ball down, but with two Ashburton defenders on her hammer, hit a rushed shot straight at the 'keeper.

A minute later, Pannella confirmed her luck was out when she squandered another gilt-edged chance laid on by Archer as she

blazed high with only Santacaterina to beat.

Ashburton set about regaining the ascendancy after half time, and within the space of 3 minutes Jackson had rattled the upright with a fierce left-foot strike, and then, from an almost identical position, flashed another shot across the face of goal.

Midfielder Tina Grinjac found the crossbar with a looping strike on the turn before Jackson was again

off-target with a powerful header from Andrea Tot-sidis' outswinging corner.

Heidelberg's breakthrough came on 75 minutes, as Pannella turned creator with a floating 35 yard free kick which Santacaterina failed to gather as she came off her line.

Frankcombe's challenge feathered the ball on towards Archer, who had the simple task of heading into the unguarded net.

With its season on the line, Ashburton was unable to lift sufficiently to get back into the contest.

Gulcan Koca perhaps had Ashburton's best chance to equalise when she found herself in acres of space and clean through on goal, but her first touch took her away from the danger zone and the United defence mopped up easily.

Heidelberg did well to shut down the lively Jackson and a desperate Seyma Erenli who never gave up as their team-mates seemed to tire.

Late in injury time, the result was but beyond doubt when Erenli was judged to have brought down Frankcombe in the penalty area.

Frankcombe calmly stepped up to the spot and slotted home neatly to set up a Grand Final showdown against Box Hill Inter next Sunday.

By George Egonidis

Photo by John Punshon and Daniel Flis



Stacey Louras (left) battles with Belinda Pannella



KRNCEVIC'S KRUNCHILINES

Greeting football fans and welcome to another dose of Krncevic's Krunchlines.

Congratulations to Altona Magic for reaching the 2006 Vodafone Cup Grand Final. After finish runners-up to Oakleigh Cannons in the regular home and away season the Magic have used the second chance to its advantage and sets up a mouthwatering clash with the giants of the league, South Melbourne. Heidelberg United did extremely well to progress as far as it did with a mounting injury-list and depleted squad, and I'm sure quite a few people would have been hoping the Final would be a blockbuster clash between the old foes, but hats off to Vlado Torteovski and his squad for bouncing back after the Semi-Final loss last week to book its place in the biggest match on the Victorian football calendar. I'm sure the Victorian football public will be out in force to witness the match and hopefully it lives up to its billing. Vlado of course, is no stranger to the big match surroundings and no doubt his expertise will serve the Magic well to try and capture the club's first Championship since it dominated the league with a hat-trick of titles in the mid-nineties. Good luck to both teams and its supporters, enjoy the day and make the most of your opportunities.

Gold Medal Night

Although I'm still waiting for my invitation to the FFV's Gold Medal Night, I'm looking forward to finding out who will be named as the best player for the men's and women's competition. Some great players have their names etched on the Honour Board from years gone by and I'm sure this year won't be any different from a very talented field. Current Soccerroo Josip Skoko won it in 1994 when he was an up and coming prospect with North Geelong Warriors before heading off for bigger and better things, as too did former Melbourne Victory player Ricky Diaco when he was with Frankston Pines in 2004. In 1995, winner Tom Pondeljak, showed us glimpses of his magic that would attract interest from NSL clubs and now finds himself as a key member of the A-league's Central Coast Mariners squad, while from a bygone era you can't go past players like Tommy Cunningham ('78 & '79), Charlie Egan ('81) and John Gardiner ('71 & '72). I hope you all enjoy the evening and may the best man and woman win.

Coaching merry-go-round

Whilst the season is coming to a close, spare a thought for all the coaches this year that have come and gone from the Vodafone Cup. Unfortunately, it is a statistic that really needs to be addressed and I'm sorry to say that it has been

detrimental to the league's reputation. Hopefully committees will resist the temptation to target the coach as a scapegoat for team performances and instead adopt a more positive, patient and understanding approach that gives the coaching staff the appropriate time to complete their tasks in a appropriate manner. We don't want the league to become a laughing stock with its volatile and unpredictable attitude towards coaches. Although we all strive to be winners, unfortunately there can only be one team that can occupy top spot, meaning that the other thirteen teams will be have to bide their time until their moment of glory arrives. Hopefully next year we'll see more coaches keep their jobs and club administrators have the foresight to do what's best for the club's future and for the well being of the game in general.

A-League

I've been watching the A-league closely since it started its second season and I'm quite surprised to notice many teams have not adopted a pattern of play as such. Whilst the league has worked overtime to get things right off the field with its marketing strategies, building fantastic corporate relationships and packages, it appears evidently clear that not everything is as well as what it should be on the field. Without meaning to be disrespectful to the current crop of play-

ers, I doubt if many of the existing players could really make their mark in the lower leagues in Europe. To achieve a sound system one need to be very well organised, prepared to put in a lot of hard work and a coach has to have the quality to begin with. In my opinion, the A-league only consists of approximately five or six players that are up to the standard to execute this type of passage of play.

Until next time,
Eddie



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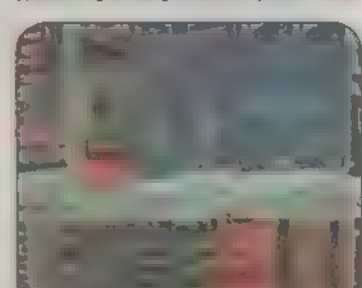
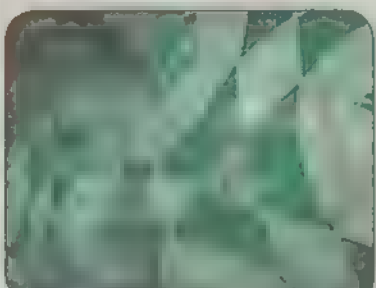
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GRAND FINAL

SOUTH MELBOURNE FC

Australia's most famous and successful football club, four time NSL Champions and three time National Cup winners, South Melbourne are in their first Vodafone Cup Grand Final since rejoining the competition in 2005. The Albert Park club is no stranger to silverware in Victoria's premier competition, having secured eight championships and six cups, to dominate the domestic competition from 1960 through to 1976. South's last campaign in Victoria's top flight produced their most memorable season when they clinched a domestic league and cup double after Peter Ollerton scored a hat-trick in the Grand Final to secure a 4-1 win over then rivals Footscray to catapult the club into Australia's first ever National competition.

Thirty years later in 2006 club President George Donekian and the "blue and white army" are wishing for a return to their glory days where they were at the forefront of Australian football and would set the benchmark for Australian Clubs. The names may have changed with Nestorides, Armstrong, Walker, Mackay and Ollerton being replaced by De Nittis, De Moraes, Baser, Anastasiadis and Oliveira, however the success which follows South Melbourne is still fuelled by the passion and the pride that continues to burn at Bob Jane Stadium.

South Melbourne finished the season in third spot at the end of the home and away season, one point behind Sunday's rivals Altona Magic and a further twelve points behind minor premiers Oakleigh Cannons. Their poor finish to the season signalled an early finals exit with only two wins from their last six matches of the season, including a loss to the Magic at home in Round 21.

With the third best defence and second best attack in the competition, John Anas-

tasiadis has built a squad which contains a blend of youth and experience and has illustrated all the required credentials to lift this season's trophy. South has captivated audiences across the competition, with some enthralling football which includes resounding victories over arch rivals the Melbourne Knights 7-0, a 4-1 victory of the Kingston "millionaires" and a 5-1 hammering of Frankston.

Coach Anastasiadis will not have been disappointed for not finishing in the top two, after his side was against the odds, when he lost two of his biggest stars mid-season. Striker Kevin Nelson left over a pay dispute and the charismatic defender Jonas Salley signed for A-League outfit the New Zealand Knights.

It seems that despite the sluggish finish to the home and away season, "Johnny A" as he is affectionately known by the South faithful, has rediscovered the chemistry which gave them a great start to the season. South has transformed their poor end of season form by storming into this year's Grand Final. They cruised past last season's champions the Green Gully Cavaliers 3-0, followed by a hard fought 2-1 victory over their Grand Final opponents Altona Magic in the Semi Final when G. De Nittis scored a magnificent brace.

Altona Magic leads South 2-1 head to head this season and is looking to clinch their fourth Vodafone Cup championship against the Lake-siders, in a match that promises to deliver.

Fernando De Moraes seems to hold the cards for a South Melbourne victory. The Brazilian maestro has had an amazing season, scoring goals, creating goals and mesmerising opposition defences with his ability to dribble, take on players and incisive passing.

By Chris Priftis
Photo by Daniel Ellis

JOHN ANASTASIADIS

"We've had a week off which has been a bit of a bonus and allowed a few players to recover from some niggling injuries. On top of that we've been working on some strategies and our game plan and we'll increase the intensity as we get closer to the big day. We just concentrating on trying to win this game and lifting this trophy, as much as Altona is I presume. We're expecting a hard and difficult game against a disciplined and very good side. I think it will be a great game with some solid football and hopefully there will be plenty of people there to enjoy it"

SQUAD

Dean Anastasiadis
Sam De Vito
George Tzirtis
Andreas Oliveira
Dino Djulbic
Rama Tavsanoglu
Fernando de Moraes
Tansel Baser
Scott MacNico
Gianni De Nittis
Antonio Nageon
Nick Curtis
Andrew Bourakis
James Stefanou
Con Dimitropoulos



20

VODAFONE

BOB JANE

SUNDAY
SEPTEMBER
KICK-OFF

PAST GRAND FINALS

2005 GREEN GULLY
2004 BULLEEN ZEBRAS
(ZEBRAS WON)
2003 GREEN GULLY
2002 PRESTON LIONS
2001 HEIDELBERG UNITED
(HEIDELBERG WON)

WHAT THE

Eddie Krncevic
Tony Pignata
Mark Boric
Costa Koutropoulos
Adrian Ceddia
George Katsamboukas
Chris Priftis
Bruno Zovko

GO

SHOWDOWN

ALTONA MAGIC FC

06 NE CUP

NE STADIUM

DAY 24TH
TEMBER
OFF 3PM

FINAL WINNERS

2-0 HEIDELBERG UTD
RAS 0-0 ALTONA MAGIC
(WON ON PENALTIES)
1-0 FRANKSTON PINES
IS 2-1 FAWKNER BLUES
D 2-2 PORT MELBOURNE
(WON ON PENALTIES)

EXPERTS THINK...

2-2	best team to win on penalties
2-2	best team to win on penalties
2-1	South Melbourne
1-0	Altona Magic
2-1	Altona Magic
2-1	South Melbourne
3-1	South Melbourne
1-1	Altona on penalties

ALL WEEKLY

Altona is just 90 minutes away from its first Victorian Premier League premiership since 1997. Under old servant and new coach Vlado Torteovski, the Magic will feel 2006 is their year after barely putting a foot wrong in the 29 weeks played in this season to date.

On Sunday, final week of a thrilling season, Altona will do battle with South Melbourne for the prized Vodafone Cup. Torteovski's men won through to the grand final in dramatic style with an extra time winner from Kole Delev against last year's runner up Heidelberg United on Saturday night.

Altona has met South Melbourne three times this season for two wins and importantly has found the back of the net on all three occasions.

The first victory, in round eight at Paisley Park, was the most dramatic of the three, with the Magic ending to a 3-1 win on the back of a double from Saso Becvinovski.

The second encounter between the sides ended with a 1-0 win by the Magic at Bob Jane Stadium in round 21, with Igor Arsovski's goal breaking the deadlock.

In the third and most recent match – a semi final last weekend – the blue and whites got over the line with a 2-1 victory at Knights Stadium.

Altona's passage through the final has been solid without being outstanding.

After securing the double chance on the final day of the season, the Magic scored a brilliant 2-0 upset victory over

high-flying minor premier Oakleigh.

It then suffered the loss to South in the semi finals, but used its double chance to perfection by bouncing back against Heidelberg.

While it has the league's leading goalscorer in its squad, Altona has not been renowned for winning its matches by huge margins.

It had the least amount of goals in the top eight teams after the regular season, but managed to lose just seven matches.

The key has been the defence, with first year goalkeeping recruit Bojo Jevdjevic outstanding, and skipper Stiven Mrkela superbly leading the strongest defensive line in the Vodafone Cup.

Up forward Becvinovski has been exceptional, netting 18 goals in 28 appearances, and Igor Arsovski, Daniel Vasilevski and Kole Delev are all capable of finding the score sheet.

The Magic will be looking to strike first in the grand final this weekend to put the pressure of lifting the trophy.

Torteovski was in charge of the club when it won a penalty shootout to premier league glory against Burwood in 2004.

It will be hoping luck is on its side on Sunday.

By Adrian Ceddia

Photo by John Punshon

VLADO TORTEVSKI

"First of all to get the chance to be involved in another Grand Final is very exciting in itself and it is something that doesn't come along every day. We are lucky because this is the second time in three years we have managed to make our way to the biggest day in the Premier League and we going to do everything we can to win it because we've tasted defeat before at this stage and it was very sad."

SQUAD

Bojo Jevdjevic
Stiven Mrkela
Levent Osman
Kole Delev
Koce Delev
Alfonso Opazo
Saso Becvinovski
Tom Razov
Agim Sherifovski
Igor Arsovski
Ivan Razov
Daniel Vasilevski
Toni Grozdanovski
Stanko Zilic
Igor Kolevski
Darcy Mingovski






MVFC



CC MARINERS



Michael Theoklitos (8): A miraculous acrobatic save to deny Kwasnik's thunderbolt, and a third clean sheet to take home this season

Kevin Muscat (7): Played the physical role perfectly up until the very last minute, earning a yellow card in stoppage time.

Daniel Piorkowski (6): Fell victim to the nerves late in the piece as CCM pushed forward, but was solid up until then

Steve Pantelidis (7): Another battling performance in midfield, getting the better of Spencer for the second time in five weeks.

Daniel Allsopp (7): Another immense physical battle, getting an assist for his effort. Will only wish he had the finish as well to get Melbourne another goal.

Archie Thompson (8): The winning goal, and more flair and action from the marquee man – but did have sticky feet on a few occasions.

Rodrigo Vargas (8): "Almost the best player on the ground" according to coach Merrick.

Kristian Sarkies (7): Almost went the full ninety, and was only done out of a number of assists by desperate defenders. Passing

was excellent.

Adrian Leijer (7): Dubbed "the new enforcer" by members of the press, Leijer took Gumprecht out of the match, then played almost a full game on a yellow without ever being in danger of a red.

Simon Storey (6): Another player caught up in the hectic finish, didn't offer a great deal on the counter attack.

Alessandro (6): A more subdued performance tonight, but still instructed to run at defenders by Merrick. Expect the Samba magic to return soon.

Subs

Adrian Caceres (7): Lively in his substitute role, but fired wide of the target on two occasions after having broken the CCM defensive line.

Claudioinho (6): On very late and barely got a touch of the ball.

Vince Lia (6): His big body filled space and ensured that the Mariners always looked up at a player when surging in the final minutes.

Unused Subs

Eugene Galekovic

Danny Vukovic (6): Not a great night for the young keeper, holding the easy shots but being well and truly caught out for the goal.

Paul O'Grady (4): His error cost the goal, and was unable to exert the physical control over Allsopp he had during preseason.

Noel Spencer (6): Lost the midfield battle to Pantelidis once again, failing to make the most of his advances into the attacking third.

Andre Gumprecht (5): Out for at least six weeks with a medial ligament tear, another miserable visit to Melbourne.

John Hutchinson (5): Spent the night in the referee's ear and left the field straight after receiving his yellow card. Would surely have been sent off had he stayed on.

Tom Pondeljak (6): Produced an occasional flash of quality, but was generally a spectator from the forward line in a quiet game.

Tony Vidmar (6): Subbed off after showing a lack of match fitness according to coach McKinna.

Vuko Tomasevic (6): Conceded a number of fouls, and failed to provide the attacking edge his last visit to Melbourne had.

Matthew Osman (7): Took good set pieces and generally kept the Melbourne defence accountable with his good series of corners.

Alex Wilkinson (6): Tough night in the backline but at least got the better of Thompson on about half of the balls fed to the Melbourne man.

Subs

Jamie McMaster (6): Showed signs in the first half after being subbed on, but faded out of the game and failed to provide an attacking threat in the desperate late stages.

Stewart Petrie (6): Lead a revival for the Mariners in the second half but couldn't pinch a goal to really earn supersub status

Andrew Clark (6): Straight swap for Vidmar and at least didn't concede a second goal after coming on.

Unused Subs

Matthew Trott

HYUNDAI A-LEAGUE

Thompson stars as Victory run continues



1 MVFC



0 CC Mariners

Melbourne's unbeaten start to the Hyundai A-League has continued after the team registered a hard-fought 1-0 win over the Central Coast Mariners in front of a sell-out crowd at Olympic Park on Sunday night.

A goal from Archie Thompson in the 51st minute proved decisive, as the magician headed the ball home into a vacant goal after a terrific Paul O'Grady clearance caused pandemonium in the area.

But if not for Melbourne's profligacy in front of goal, the margin could have been far greater with Thompson and Adrian Caceres amongst a host of others squandering numerous golden opportunities.

Despite the lack of decisiveness in front of goal, Thompson starred as he conducted a footballing master class, unveiling a collection of trickery that left the crowd in awe, while finally putting to bed concerns over his pre-season lack of form.

The result leaves last year's grand finalists firmly embedded on the bottom of the A-League table, and raises questions over the wisdom of a new five-year contract handed to Laurie McKinna before the season.

Victory commenced in promising fashion as Alessandro, on his return to the Melbourne starting lineup, again wreaked havoc on the left flank with his darting movements and threatening step overs.

But his influence waned as the half continued, with Alex Wilkinson assertively scuppering the Brazilian's attempts to penetrate the Mariners defence.

After only three minutes, Melbourne should have gone one up, as a whipped Kristian Sarkies corner was nodded goal-wards by Adnan Leijer, before Danny Allsopp almost capitalised on the rebound only to be denied by Danny Vukovic from point



blank range.

Again Allsopp came close minutes later, shooting into the arms of Vukovic from a tight angle after being fed a through ball by Sarkies.

Savagely brought down from behind by Leijer in a challenge that earned the Melbourne defender a yellow card, Andre Gumprecht was an early casualty of the conflict, substituted off following a quarter an hour of play.

Reveling in the hole behind the attackers, Sarkies continued to stake his claim for a permanent role in Melbourne's starting XI despite Fred's imminent return, looking menacing with his inquisitive approach to play.

But after a less than convincing opening, the Mariners almost stole the lead in the 29th minute, when Jamie McMaster nearly capitalised on a dreadful defensive lapse, gathering the ball before moving

in on goal and striking the ball into an oncoming Michael Theoklitos.

The forward combination of Allsopp and Thompson was causing the Mariners rearguard no end of problems, with the intricate one two passes between the pair almost paying dividends in the 30th minute, when Thompson latched onto an Allsopp pass inside the area before toe poking the ball into Vukovic.

Five minutes into the second half, Thompson should have edged Melbourne ahead, when one-on-one with the Central Coast's 'keeper, the marquee star was able to round Vukovic before shooting across the face of goal.

He atoned for his error a minute later however, nodding a lofted ball into an empty net in the 51st minute.

Latching onto a disastrous back pass that left Vu-

kovic in no man's land, Allsopp beat the 'keeper to the ball and toe poked it goalwards, before the predatory attacker applied the finishing touch.

Following his return to form last week, Thompson terrorised the Mariners defence with his wily runs and deft touch, in what was perhaps his best performance in Victory colours.

In the 70th minute, a wonderful strike by Adam Kwasnik forced Theoklitos into a brilliant save, as the dangerous attacker unleashed a ferocious pile driver from the edge of the area.

As the Central Coast continued to struggle with Melbourne's quick-fire attacks, the ball fell for Caceres in the area with 15 minutes remaining, but the substitute was unable to find the back of the net from an acute angle, shooting across the face of goal.

Muscat almost punished the Mariners for its poor marking and doubled Melbourne's lead in the game's dying stages, heading a Sarkies cross against the upright when unmarked in the area.

Victory coach Ernie Merrick was thrilled with the performance of his chargers. He said: "I thought the boys could have scored about four (goals) and I could relax but right at the end we made it a little bit difficult for ourselves but it was fantastic."

"Against a side we had never beaten at home before, we played them off the park."

Merrick was also thrilled with the cohesion of his team's front pairing of Allsopp and Thompson, stating he believed they would cause trouble to most defenders in the league.

Following the win, only Melbourne's second against the Mariners in official competition, Thompson ambitiously stated that the Victory were capable of winning the A-League title.

"The team we have got now is going to take us to the finals and (then) we're going to win the league, it is as simple as that," he said.

Merrick was more conservative than his marquee star however, restating his goal that the team will make the finals.

By Simon Chiarelli

Photo by Daniel Ellis



Monday 11 September

HYUNDAI A-LEAGUE

Roar Rip Knights Apart



5 QLD Roar

0 NZ Knights

Queensland Roar has extended its unbeaten run to nine matches thanks to a convincing 5-0 win over the New Zealand Knights at Suncorp Stadium.

Matt McKay took full advantage of some slack Knights marking to score in the sixth minute before Brazilian striker Reinaldo won, and subsequently converted Queensland's first-ever penalty soon after half-time.

The Roar had not been awarded a spot-kick in its previous 24 Hyundai A-League outings.

The home side stuttered through the first-half - and could have twice leaked goals to Jonti Richter - before stamping its mark in the second term with some flowing football as confidence increased.

Reinaldo, Simon Lynch, Ante Milcic and McKay again added to New Zealand's woes with second-half strikes to send Queensland back to the top of the table, above Melbourne Victory, who host the Central Coast Mariners on Sunday.

Pre-match, former Qantas Socceroos coach Frank Farina suggested that if the Roar beat New Zealand, it would "set itself up as a serious finals contender, if not a championship contender".

And another convincing performance will have left Roar fans hoping their side can maintain a start which has seen eight goals scored and none conceded at Suncorp.

New Zealand coach Paul Nevin drafted Noah Hickey and Dani Rodriguez straight back into the starting XI after knee and hamstring injuries with Michael Turnbull preferred to Danny Milosevic in goal.

But it was former fans favourite Richter who was most intent to prove a point to Queensland boss Miron Bleiberg in his first match back in Brisbane after an off-season switch to the Knights.

Richter, who played 17 times for the Roar last season, albeit half as substitute, missed the Knights' best chances during the first term.

Just four minutes in, a poor goal-kick from goalkeeper Liam Reddy fell straight to Scot Gemmill and his first time pass found Richter who dragged his shot wide.

Midway through the half, Richter again came closest when, following neat build-up play from Rodriguez, he blasted narrowly over the bar.

But Queensland was far more ruthless in front of goal. As early as the sixth minute, Lynch cleverly played Milcic through but his shot was well smothered by the returning Turnbull.

Then, less than 60 seconds later, the Roar had opened the scoring. Reinaldo found McKay in acres of space on Queensland's left and the 23-year-old finished first time through Turnbull's legs.

New Zealand bounced back to force proceedings but failed to trouble Roar 'keeper Liam Reddy with a series of free-kicks around the box and only tested Reddy for the first time with Malik Buari's effort in first-half stoppage time.

The second-half, though, was a different story. Sime Kovacevic, only playing because of the injury to Swiss full-back Gregory Duruz, needlessly tugged back Reinaldo just inside the Knights box.



with referee Mark Shield showing no hesitation in awarding Queensland a penalty.

After some deliberation as to the identity of the penalty taker, Reinaldo sent Turnbull the wrong way - with an impressive gymnastic celebration following to the delight of the fans.

Chances were coming easy by now for the Roar with Remo Buess and substitute Spase Dilevski wasting good opportunities.

Dilevski then turned provider for Lynch to score

his third of the season with typical aplomb before playing through Chinese import Yuning Zhang who unselfishly squared for Milcic to open his Queensland account.

In the closing stages of the game, Turnbull found Zhang's long-distance shot too hot to handle and McKay tucked away the rebound.

By Marc Fox, Courtesy of FFA

Adelaide's March Continues



3 Adelaide Utd

GLORY 0 Perth Glory

Adelaide United has recorded its second win in a row with an impressive and unrelenting 3-0 victory over Perth Glory at Hindmarsh Stadium on Saturday.

The home side set up the result with two well-executed goals in the first half before an unlucky own goal from Jamie Coyne five minutes after the break crushed the Glory's spirit.

Travis Dodd, Fernando, Shengqing Qu and Jason Spagnuolo ran riot in the Glory's half while the Reds' defence, led by Ang Costanzo, was solid and disciplined.

After losing its first two games, Adelaide has bounced back in style, kicking eight goals in the past fortnight.

It was a disappointing performance by Perth - its players looked shell-shocked during the second



half as Adelaide staged wave after wave of attacking football.

Adelaide United coach John Kosmina said the win against Perth was better than the side's 5-1 victory over Newcastle in round three.

"I think we progressed from last week. It was a good performance (last week) but we got a bit sloppy - tonight we weren't," he said.

"We still gave the ball away a few times but having said that, we kept trying to play and that was the thing I think that brought about the result."

"We played some really good stuff, the goals were well-constructed."

Perth Glory coach Ron Smith said his side made a

promising start to the contest but 'lost their way' after Adelaide's first goal.

"Adelaide played well, we had a few structural changes to try and combat them tonight and it didn't quite work in the first half," he said.

"The second half performance, I was a lot happier with, in terms of our structure."

"And usually, when you are losing, the game tends to become a bit end to end which it did."

The build up to Adelaide's first goal was almost as impressive as the score itself.

Streaming down the right hand side of the pitch, Dodd sent a well-weighted ball into space ahead of Greg Owens.

Owens crossed the ball where Spagnuolo showed a wise head by heading the ball away from goal but into the path of Fernando.

The Brazilian had no trouble beating the right hand of Glory goalkeeper Alex Vrteski with his left foot kick.

Dodd added his name to the score sheet in the 34th minute.

A Carl Veart pass went between two Perth defenders and found the young Qantas Socceroo, whose curling and powerful strike beat the diving keeper. With only minutes left in the half, Fernando found

space in the box and had a chance to make it 3-0, but he lost control of his kick and it went sailing over the cross bar and into the second tier of Hindmarsh Stadium's grandstand.

While Adelaide looked the more dangerous side, Perth was not without its chances to hit back.

Only a diving save from Robert Bajic stopped Simon Colosimo leveling the scores with a well-struck shot at the 32nd minute.

Leo Bertos was a creative playmaker during an even opening but the visitors couldn't make the most of a handful of corner kicks.

United could have easily shut-up shop in the second half but continued to attack.

A clever back-heel pass from Qu in the 50th minute set up Fernando for Adelaide's third goal.

The striker's kick from just outside the box took a fortunate deflection off Coyne leaving keeper Vrteski flat footed and out of luck.

With the three points in the bank, Adelaide gave Bobby Petta and Dez Giraldo valuable game time and rested Qu and Spagnuolo.

Adelaide's shots on goal came thick and fast throughout an exhibition style second half, ensuring the crowd of 11,474 was entertained until the final whistle.

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Roar Hold Mariners At Home



2 Sydney FC



2 Newcastle Jets

Milton Rodriguez has stolen the show on his long-awaited Newcastle debut as he came off the bench to rescue a 2-2 draw for the Jets against reigning premier Sydney FC.

Newcastle has conceded eight goals in its last two games and looked on course for another defeat after two goals in five first-half minutes from Steve Corica (penalty) and David Zdrnec put Sydney in control.

However, Rodriguez, whose debut was delayed by visa problems, pulled one back in stoppage time before claiming a 63rd-minute equaliser.

And Newcastle almost ended Sydney's 12-month unbeaten home record with Sydney having Corica dismissed for dissent in the 67th minute before seeing Newcastle's Matthew Thompson hit the crossbar in stoppage time.

Sydney controlled the opening stages but it had little to show for its dominance in a start that was crying out for the creativity of potential guest-player signing Benito Carbone.

Sasho Petrovski narrowly failed to connect with Mark Milligan's cross-shot in the fourth minute, while 15 minutes later Corica sent a 25-yard effort well wide.

In the meantime, Newcastle served notice of their threat on the break when Mark Bridge released striker Vaughan Coveny on the right and the New Zealand international fired narrowly over from just outside the box.

Coveny was then forced to make way midway through the half with a suspected hamstring strain, although that allowed Rodriguez to come into the fray.

The game burst into life following the Colombian's introduction with Nick Carle firing straight at Sydney goalkeeper Clint Bolton in the 25th minute.

Then Sydney broke the deadlock with a confident 33rd-minute penalty from Corica after Zdrnec had been pulled back in the box by Paul Okon.

Milligan appeared to be fouled by Joe Griffiths but referee Matthew Breeze chose to play advantage and it proved to be a successful decision as Zdrnec was then fouled.

Sydney soon doubled its lead in the 38th minute following



a mistake by Newcastle left back Paul Kohler. Mark Rudan's ball forward appeared to be intercepted by Kohler but he could only flick the ball on for Zdrnec, who managed to hold off Duran before heading the ball over Kennedy and into the Newcastle net.

Nick Theodorakopoulos' men looked in disarray as Sydney ploughed forward in search of a third but Newcastle gave itself a lifeline on the stroke of half-time following the best move of the game.

Kohler and Griffiths combined on the left to release Carle, who squared the ball for Rodriguez and the striker took

one touch before planting the ball past Bolton from the edge of the six-yard box.

Newcastle looked to build on that momentum after the break although the first chance of the half fell to Sydney midfielder Terry McFlynn, who volleyed over from a central position.

The Jets responded with more good work down the left making an opening for Carle, only to see his shot blocked.

But in the 63rd minute the visitors were level after some quick thinking on the left. The Jets played a quick free-

kick wide to Griffiths, who then nicked the ball forward for Rodriguez and his powerful left-footed drive sneaked under Bolton at his near post.

Sydney was hit with Corica's dismissal but still threatened with Zdrnec heading off target from a good position in the 71st minute before substitute Ruben Zadkovich fired over from the left with seven minutes left.

But Sydney breathed a huge sigh of relief when Thompson's effort from inside the box came back off the bar at the death.

Round 4 Scoreboard

Sydney FC 2 Corica 33p, Zdrnec 38
Newcastle Jets 2 Rodriguez 46+, 62
Crowd: 15,488 at Aussie Stadium

Queensland Roar 5 (McKay 7 / 86, Renaldo 55, Lynch 72, Milicic 80)
New Zealand 0
Crowd: 15,517 at Suncorp Stadium

Adelaide United 3 Fernando 15, Dodd 34, Coyne 51og
Perth Glory 0
Crowd: 11,474
Hindmarsh Stadium

Melbourne Victory 1 (Thompson 52)
Central Coast Mariners 0
Crowd: 17,617

A-League Table

Team	P	W	D	L	GF	GA	GD
Melbourne Victory	4	4	0	0	9	2	7
Queensland Roar	4	3	1	0	11	12	0
Adelaide United	4	2	1	2	8	4	4
Sydney FC	4	1	2	1	6	6	0
Perth Glory	4	1	1	2	3	7	-4
New Zealand	4	1	1	2	1	8	-7
Newcastle Jets	4	0	2	2	5	10	-5

Round 5 Fixtures

New Zealand Knights FC

v

Sydney FC

Sat 21 Sep 06

North Harbour Stadium 6.00 pm

Queensland Roar

v

Adelaide United FC

Fri 22 Sep 06

Suncorp Stadium 8pm

Mariners

vs

Newcastle United FC

Sat 23 Sep 06

Central Coast Stadium 7pm

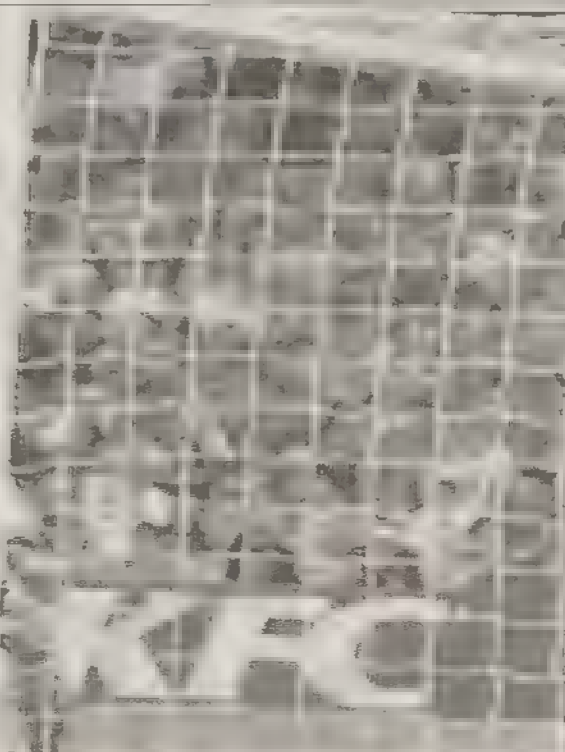
Perth

v

Melbourne Victory FC

Sun 24 Sep 06

Members Equity Stadium 5.00 pm



WORLD FOOTBALL WRAP

FIFA Concerns For World Cup 2010

CAPE TOWN, ZURICH, Sep 16- FIFA president Sepp Blatter has voiced his concerns over the organisation of the 2010 World Cup, to be held in South Africa. According to reports, the country has not started the building of new, needed stadiums yet. "It is high time they started," Blatter said after a FIFA meeting in Zurich. "They have plans, they have the money, and the decisions are made. But no one is spotted with a hammer or a shovel." Australia has offered to organise the event would South Africa not be able to hold on to the schedule.

Depor Too Strong For Villareal

A CORUÑA, Sep 16 - Deportivo la Coruña needed two goals from Joan Capdevila to beat Villarreal at Riazor stadium in Galicia. Less than four minutes had been played in A Coruña when Capdevila scored his first for the home side, and the same player also netted the second, seven minutes after the hour mark. Deportivo now have seven points and temporarily take the top position in the Primera Division, but this should change after Sunday's fixtures. Villarreal have yet to achieve a win. Last season's semi-finalists in the Champions League began this season with one draw and two defeats.

Canizares Remains At Valencia

VALENCIA, Sep 16 - Goalkeeper Santiago Canizares will be spending another two years at his current side, Valencia. This has been reported by Spanish sports paper AS. The 36-year-old is expected to sign his new contract later this year, and will then continue to represent 'the Bats' until the summer of 2009. The keeper joined Valencia from Real Madrid in 1998, and is currently in his ninth season at the club. During his time with Valencia, Canizares won the Liga in 2002 and 2004 and the UEFA Cup in 2004. The Champions League final was reached in 2000 and 2001, but the trophy went to Real Madrid and Bayern Munich respectively.

Beckham Wants To Prove Himself

MADRID, LONDON, Sep 16 - In an interview with the Daily Mirror tabloid, David Beckham has expressed his desire to return to the England squad and vindicate his dropping from the team. "It's a terrible feeling not playing for England after 10 years, but I'm not bitter - more disappointed and hurt," the former England captain said. "He [McClaren] has made a decision, but I've got a burning desire to prove him wrong." The Real Madrid star said McClaren had told him "you are one of the casualties" when he took over from Sven-Goran Eriksson following England's World Cup campaign in Germany.

Cicinho Denies Move

MADRID/ROME/LONDON, Sep 14 - Cicinho's agent, Ricardo Sarris, denied that the full back was trying to move away from Real Madrid. He denies there's any contact with AS Roma for a move of the Brazilian international player (12 caps). The player transferred from Sao Paulo during the Christmas transfer window, and is touted by Spanish media as the first player to go. Fabio Capello had stated the player was too attacking in his view, while he lacks in defence. "I have asked AS Roma to leave Cicinho alone. He wants to succeed at Real Madrid no matter what," Sarris said. Meanwhile, West Ham coach Alan Pardew admitted West Ham tried to sign the Brazilian during the summer, but failed. "We'll try again in January," Pardew stated.

Scaloni Joins Santander

SANTANDER, Sep 13 - Argentinian midfielder Lionel Scaloni will be joining Spanish Primera Division side Racing de Santander from Deportivo de la Coruña. Scaloni moved to Europe from Estudiantes de La Plata in 1998, and won the Spanish league two years later, followed by the Copa del Rey in 2002. After a struggle with Depor manager Joaquin Capar-

ros, Scaloni spent the second half of last season on loan at West Ham United.

Tristan Returns to Mallorca

MALLORCA, Sep 13 - Striker Diego Tristan has penned a one-year deal taking him back to Real Mallorca. The 30-year-old was released by Deportivo La Coruña this summer and got offers from Bolton Wanderers, Charlton Athletic and Levante. Tristan made his debut for Mallorca in the 1999/2000 season, when he netted 18 goals. He subsequently transferred to Deportivo and remained at Riazor for six seasons. He has 15 caps for Spain. He chose for the Islanders in spite of Bolton's wage offer of 1.8 million Euro per annum.

Inter Fight Back For Draw

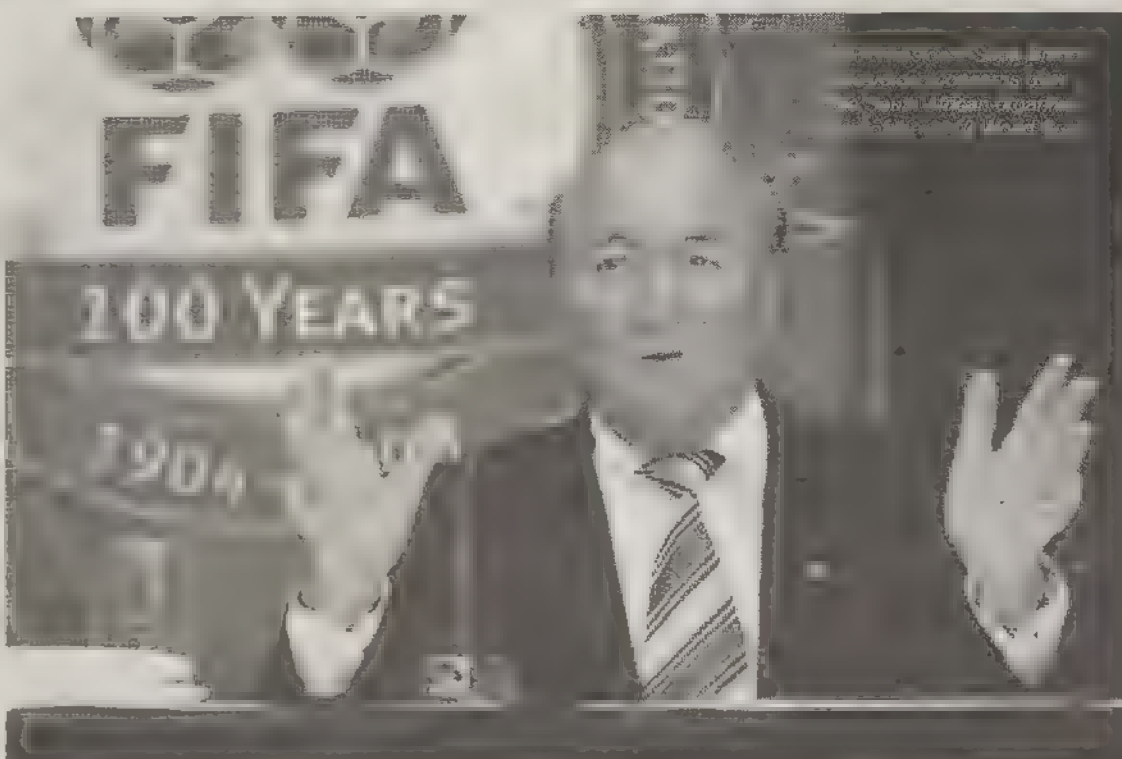
MILAN, Sep 16 - After falling behind to a penalty early in the second half, Inter Milan came from behind to pick a 1-1 draw against Sampdoria in their opening home fixture of the Serie A season. Zlatan Ibrahimovic and Hernán Crespo were constant threats to the Sampdoria goal in the first half, but they found goalkeeper Luca Castellazzi in fine form for the visitors from Genoa. The match, however, took a dramatic turn in the 48th minute when Sampdoria were awarded a penalty after Francesco Flachi was fouled in the area by Iván Córdoba, who the visitors felt deserved to be sent off. Flachi then stepped up to the spot and fired his shot past Francesco Toldo in the Inter goal to give Sampdoria a shock lead. Inter then turned on the pressure at a higher level than any point in the game, determined not to go down to defeat in their first home match of the season. It took until the 79th minute, but they were rewarded for their intensity when Sampdoria goalkeeper Castellazzi failed to control a ball and it went into the net off of his teammate Massimo Bonanni.

Chivu Committed To Roma

ROME, Sep 14 - The agent of AS Roma defender Cristian Chivu has again played down talks of a possible move to Real Madrid. Agent Andrea Pretti even went as far as to reveal that the Romanian is seeking to sign a new contract with the Giallorossi, a move which would keep him in the capital beyond 2008. "I see no problems in the renewal of Chivu's contract," said Pretti. "I saw Roma's sporting director Daniele Pradè on August 31, but we didn't set a date for a further meeting. "I will call him next week, so we can finally close the issue. Central defenders have a high value and they are not easy to find, but Cristian has clearly said that he wishes to stay with Roma. "All the rumours suggesting he will move are bothering him a lot."

Inzaghi Finds Form

MILAN, Sep 14 - Veteran Italian striker Pippo Inzaghi is delighted with his current form, having netted 5 goals in 5 games so far this season. "I have the good fortune to play in this side and they always put me in a position to score," said the humble Inzaghi. "At the moment I am in fine shape physically and that is the most important thing, as it makes everything easier." Speaking with reporters about summer interest from AS Roma, the Rossoneri forward insisted that he would see out his playing days in Milan and also refused to be drawn on comment of his tally of 55 goals in European competition.



"I will keep going with Milan. When I retire, then perhaps these tables will be more important, but right now I want to win with the Rossoneri and for this fantastic crowd."

Kaka Wants Milan Captaincy

MILAN, Sep 13 - After a summer confronted by transfer rumours, Brazilian ace Kaka has revealed he wants to stay with the Rossoneri. The Brazilian international had to endure constant speculation with regards to a move to Madrid after the World Cup, but has come out saying that he does not want to leave Milan. "My plan is not to leave," insisted the Brazilian. "Indeed, I want to become captain of this club. It appeals to me to take on a bigger role and more responsibility. It will make me a better player."

Novellino Under Pressure At Samp

GENOA, Sep 13 - Sampdoria manager Walter Novellino is under increasing pressure to hold his job. The Genoa club lost to Empoli in Serie A's opening round of fixtures on the weekend, and following a terrible finish to last season's campaign, must begin taking points immediately if Novellino intends on surviving. Sampdoria's next two games are against Inter Milan and Udinese and it has been speculated that failures in these two fixtures will see the former Venezia manager shown the door.

ENGLAND

Joe Cole Injury Woes

LONDON, Sep 15 - Chelsea midfielder Joe Cole will not be representing his side against Liverpool this summer. The player is still struggling with a knee injury. Cole did play as substitute against Werder Bremen on Tuesday, but his knee could not handle the pressure yet with a set-back as result. "I am very disappointed. Nothing hurt anymore and now this. I trained very hard to be fit, it's very frustrating," said Cole. "I just have to take it easy. I wanted to play against Liverpool, but don't feel like being out even longer."

Lennon Sidelined For a Month

LONDON, Sep 15 - Tottenham Hotspur player Aaron Lennon will not be able to play for at least one month, as result of a damaged knee ligament. The 19 year old Lennon already missed the Spurs' UEFA Cup match with Slavia Prague, and will undergo surgery this Saturday.

Injury Plague At Arsenal

LONDON, Sep 15 - Arsenal will most probably have

to do without both Thierry Henry and Robin van Persie for their Premiership clash with Manchester United this Sunday. Henry, who also missed out on Arsenal's match with Hamburg in the Champions League earlier this week, is still struggling with a foot injury. Van Persie meanwhile, returned from Germany with a hip injury and is a doubt as well, according to manager Arsene Wenger. Senderos, Diaby, Lauren and Clichy are other absences for this match, while Kolo Touré's injury suffered against Hamburg is less serious than expected.

McCarthy Just Needs Time

BLACKBURN, Sep 14 - Blackburn Rovers boss Mark Hughes insists that summer signee Benni McCarthy will be key a figure for the club once he establishes himself in the Premiership. The South African international made the move from Porto in the summer and so date has just one goal - Blackburn's lone goal of the season. "To be fair with regards to Benni, I feel the expectations are a little too high," Hughes said in McCarthy's defense. "He has come into a different league, we are only four games in and yet people are expecting him to have a huge impact. After scoring goals in pre-season and one in the Premiership, I'm happy with what he is showing at the moment. "But it will take time, just as it is doing for other big signings at other clubs. "So I've no worries with regard to Benni McCarthy because he is a quality player, a European Cup winner. He'll have an impact at this level and very quickly get stronger as a Premier League player, that's for sure."

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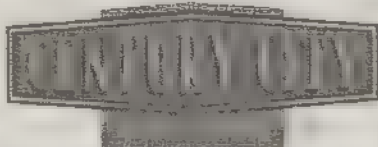
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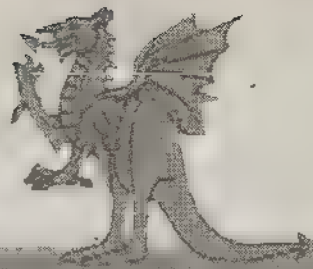
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a pom's home view



The Premiership is barely a month into the season and the table does not reflect the pattern that we would expect. With the big four; Manchester United, Chelsea, Liverpool and Arsenal are in 2nd, 4th, 12th and 17th respectively. This weekend sees the first of the big clashes with Manchester United hosting Arsenal and Liverpool visiting the champions Chelsea...

The Blues did the double over Liverpool last season and will be eager to make up ground on Manchester United. It will be the 12th time they have met while Jose Mourinho and Rafael Benitez have been in charge of the clubs. In recent games, the managers have avoided the traditional post-match handshake and Mourinho insists matters are unlikely to change. United will be going into the game against the Gunners with a 10-point advantage. Clashes between the teams of Sir Alex Ferguson and Arsene Wenger are historically feisty affairs, and their rivalry relationship is known for verbal outbursts. Mourinho and Wenger's tolerance for each other has been recently evident - and indeed ongoing with the 'Whinging' Gallas - 'Casley' Cole transfer saga. In fact, out of the four of top Premiership managers only Ferguson and Mourinho have time for each other. In general, Premiership pre and post

match analysis' and interviews are more akin to a boxing match or 'Wrestle Mania' showdown than the respectable English game of football.

The Premiership is considered the hardest league in the World. Every game is considered a big battle, with the players making sure they are not the ones left on the floor or stretcher. It would be interesting if football was treated as a boxing bout and the Premiership trophy was replaced by a Premiership - Heavyweight belt. This would mean that the belt would be passed from the incumbent to any opponent who beats them. Then whoever is left with the belt on the last day of the season would be the season champions. Applied to the Premiership, this system throws up some unlikely scenarios.

Assuming that the title started on the final season of the old First Division with Leeds United as the belt and title holders, the Premiership-Title-Belt-Champions would be as follows: 92-93 Norwich City, 93-94 West Ham United, 94-95 Nottingham Forest, 95-96 Newcastle United, 96-97 Aston Villa, 97-98 Derby County, 98-99 Leeds United, 99-00 Sheffield Wednesday, 2000-01 Sheffield United, 01-02 Birmingham City, 02-03 Leeds United, 03-04 Portsmouth, 04-05 Manchester United, 05-06 Blackburn Rovers.

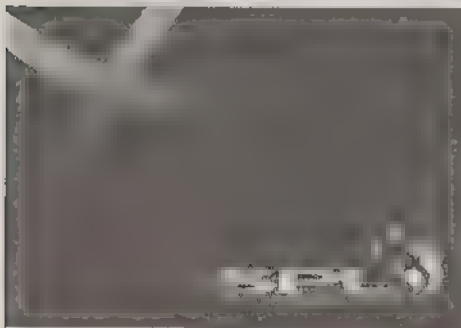
Last season would have ended with Chelsea losing the belt to Blackburn on the last match day and the belt would have been changed hands 13 times as follows:

Man Utd 1 - 2 Blackburn 24/9/05
Liverpool 1 - 0 Blackburn 15/10/05
Fulham 2 - 0 Liverpool 22/10/05
Wigan 1 - 0 Fulham 29/10/05
Wigan 2 - 3 Arsenal 19/11/05
Bolton 2 - 0 Arsenal 3/12/05
Man Utd 4 - 1 Bolton 31/12/05
Man City 3 - 1 Man Utd 14/1/06
Bolton 2 - 0 Man City 21/1/06
Newcastle 3 - 1 Bolton 4/3/06
Man Utd 2 - 0 Newcastle 12/3/06
Chelsea 3 - 0 Man Utd 29/4/06
Blackburn 1 - 0 Chelsea 2/5/06

With Portsmouth beating Blackburn 3-0 on 19/8/06 they would be the current belt holders and thus top of the Premiership, which oddly enough this weekend saw them top of the actual Premiership table for the first time in their history!

By Richard Sucksmith

TARTAN TALK with Aie Townsend



Here in Australia, opportunities to watch Scottish football are few.

The only occasions when a Scottish club will be televised on free-to-air television, is when they play big-name clubs in Europe.

This may happen once, twice a year, so when SBS does indulge us Scottish football fans, you grasp it with both hands. Thus last Thursday morning I found myself getting up at 4.30am to watch Manchester United v Celtic.

Anyone else who was prepared to sacrifice half-a-night's sleep, would have witnessed an exciting volatile match. Despite losing 3-2, Celtic's performance was commendable. It was Celtic's first Champions League group stage match for two years. For Gordon Strachan, it was only his second European fixture, after last year's humiliating loss to Atromitos. He has never been allowed to forget that night, and the match has remained a distracting blight on what was otherwise a successful first year as manager. Strachan will always be compared to his predecessor, Martin O'Neill. Until he can beat a high-profile club in Europe, as O'Neill did on countless occasions, this comparison will never work in Strachan's favour.

Meeting an in-form Manchester United, at Old Trafford, Celtic had to begin their campaign in what would have been a difficult match for any club, even Chelsea or Barcelona. Considering Celtic's injury problems, their mediocre form in the SPL, and the fact that they lost 3-0 to a Man U reserves side only last month, there was every reason to expect a rout.

But the rout never came. In fact Celtic went 1-0 up, after a goal from Jan Vennegor of Hesselink, his third in as many games. Man U's Louis Saha hit back with



Celtic manager Gordon Strachan lost out to fellow Scot Sir Alex Ferguson

two quick goals, before Celtic managed to equalise after a brilliant free kick from Nakamura. But in the end, Celtic lost after conceding another goal soon after half time.

In the days to follow, Celtic fans and commentators have gone over the match, trying to work out where they went wrong, and what could have been. Two of Man U's goals came after recent signing Thomas Gravesen meekly gave up possession in defence, and has since been heavily criticised in the Scottish media. But to be fair, Man U also missed a number of opportunities, and if it weren't for the brilliant keeping of Artur Boruc, it could well have been a rout. Even Sir Alex Ferguson was impressed with what he saw from Celtic, and made it known that he expects them to qualify for the final 16.

However the outlook isn't so positive for Scotland's other representatives. Rangers struggled in a 0-0 draw against Molde.

Beating the relegation-bound Norwegian side should have been a formality, but the Gers couldn't score, and in the end were lucky not to concede a goal. With the second leg being played at Ibrox, Rangers are still clear favourites to qualify for the UEFA Cup group stages. Hearts European venture seems to have ended, after losing to Sparta Prague 2-0. Owner Vladimir Romanov

might like to make excuses and blame the referees, but the truth is that the Jambos were once again clearly outplayed. Unfortunately for many employed at the club, last year Romanov promised a European trophy within three years and he is too proud to back down from such pledges, no matter how unrealistic. Consequently Valdes Ivanuskies is expected to soon become the fourth manager to be sacked by Romanov. The only thing that might save him, is the fact that once he is gone, there are few managers in Europe desperate enough to accept such an insecure and volatile job. At the start of the year, Hearts were expected to challenge the Old Firm duopoly. But seven games into the season, and already the top two positions have been claimed by Celtic and Rangers. What is even more depressing for anyone hoping for an open competition, is that both clubs lead the SPL while playing very mediocre football. Before Sunday's match against Hibs,

the Gers had drawn three games from six, yet still find themselves second. Celtic has only lost one game, but their wins have been far from spectacular, against much weaker clubs.

On Saturday, while admittedly recovering from their heroics at Old Trafford, they could only manage a 1-0 win over Dunfermline.

Hearts, who were due to play Motherwell last Sunday, look in bad shape. For the second time this season they were booed off the pitch last week after losing to St. Mirren. They find themselves sliding down the table, having just been overtaken by both Aberdeen and Kilmarnock.

European trophies have never looked more unattainable and Hearts fans in Australia needn't worry about getting up at 4.30am just yet.

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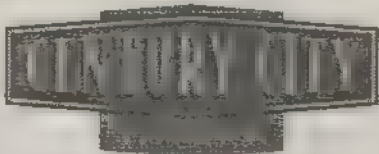
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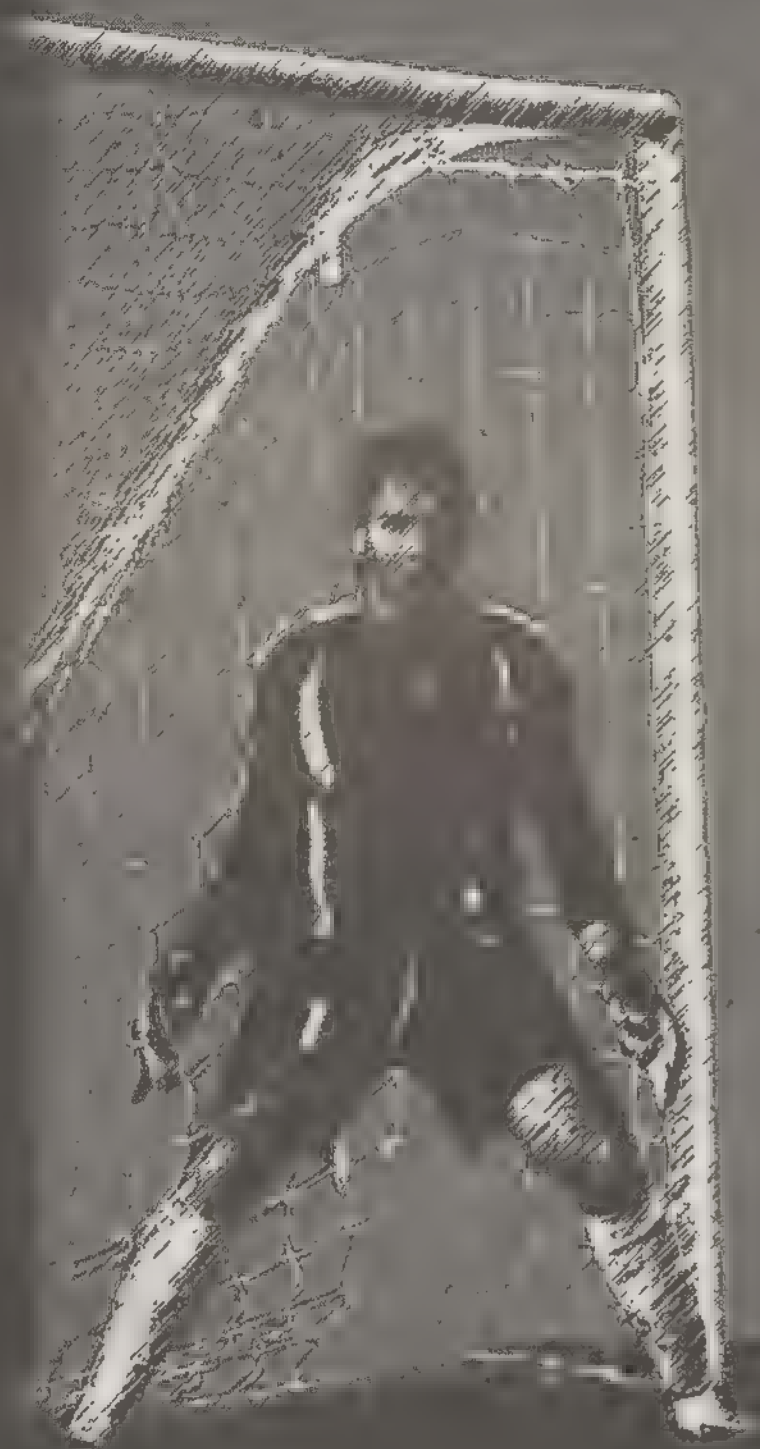
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BAYSIDE FOOTBALL LEAGUE



Women's League Cup

Ladies first gents! Rosebud A created a big upset when it defeated Cuscatlan away from home 3 - 1. This was a sensational result for Rosebud and also one that marks the first ever win for the 'A' team. However it is not over for Cuscatlan as they were the best losing team of this round and will advance to face Hampton Park United in the next round to determine the participants for the cup final. League champions Hampton Park United grabbed a solid win once again over Frankston Fillies 4 - 1, whilst Frankston Pines made the most of their trip to Rosebud with a solid 4 - 1 win over Rosebud B. Frankston now will compete against Rosebud A.

Sands Hotel Challenge Cup

The Sands Hotel Challenge Cup is now down to four teams with all of them equally with a chance to take the cup home. Mt Lilydale Old Collegians created a surprised 2 - 1 away win over Rosebud to make big strides in their

first every attempt at cup glory. Mt Lilydale had knock over last years cup winners Brighton Old Boys the previous weekend and now after their win over Rosebud has to take to the pitch against Hampton Park United. Hampton Park United showed that they hunger for something out of this year as they made sure that there weren't going to be any upsets when they trounced Premier Reserve team Western Port Wanderers B 10 - 1. Still it is a very commendable effort from Western Port B for making it this far. But the same cannot be said about Seaford United.

Division 3's Seaford United took the easy way out of their match against Premier League's Western Port Wanderers when they forfeited the match. It was very unfortunate and not shown in good spirit of the cup competition. Western Port advances but they will be facing a team that is on a high, Peninsula. Now what a match this was. Peninsula came from an early goal behind to Langwarrin to equalize late into the second half, and then have a goal disallowed for offside in the dying minutes to force extra time. It was in extra time that Langwarrin's cup effort came to a crushing end when an shot was parried by the Langy keeper that then was accidentally headed in as an own goal by the defence. Peninsula was applauded off the pitch as they enter the semi finals for the first time ever.

Trophy-Wise League Cup

The Trophy-Wise League Cup has some surprised teams in the semis finals next weekend with two Division 3 teams in the final four!

Div 3 champs Phillip Island made the most of their home ground advantage when they defeated Premier Reserve team Bayswater Strikers 6 - 2. Phillip Island is a former winner of the Trophy-Wise League cup but now have to overcome a Premier League team to be able to compete in the final. That team is the Croydon Ranges.

Croydon Ranges exacted some sort of revenge against Div 1's Brighton Old Boys. As you may remember these two teams competed in the Sands Hotel Challenge Cup final last season with Brighton single goal in the first half the deciding factor. Croydon Ranges made sure of no upset win this time as they won 3 - 0. Bayswater Strikers was expected to defeat Division 1's Monash Peninsula, but Monash made a game off it by

scoring twice. Still Bayswater did enough to advance with a final score of 3 - 2. There next game is against a rested Division 3's Frankston Pines.

Frankston Pines got by courtesy of a surprising walkover by Chelsea Old Boys. Again this is very disappointing for the league that another walkover took place in the quarter finals. Can Frankston Pines over the might of Bayswater Strikers.

Peninsula Thanks Langwarrin

I would like to pass on many thanks to the Langwarrin Soccer Club, its players and supporters for not only providing a great game of soccer but for their generous applause after the game.

In a game that could have easily gone either way and resulted in an own golden goal for Peninsula our players were overwhelmed by the respect & applause shown by the Langwarrin supporters to not only their own players but to our players as well.

I have received many positive comments from our players and supporters who were there on the day and I realize that all too often we only ever hear the negative responses and not the positives.

We will have a tough match against Western Port this week, particularly with our best player away but only hope we can once again put on a great game what ever the outcome. We look forward to playing at Langwarrin once again.

Janet Stuckenschmidt : President : Peninsula Soccer Club

Montrose kicks goals with Goalkick

Just keeping you updated with the success so far of Montrose Goalkick.

Our first official Montrose Goalkick Kicked off 5.30pm yesterday and we were blown away with the success. A head count came to around 80 kids. And so far today the phones have been running hot after parents heard of the success of last night's clinic.

Seaford United pulls out of match against Western Port.

Very disappointingly, Seaford United cannot get enough players to the Western Port Wanderers quarter finals match this weekend. It is mandatory to participate in cup fixtures and clubs can be fined.

Women's Division Has Sparked Big Interest Next Season

A number of clubs are pushing forward with plans to enter into the women's division for 2007. Clubs that includes Mornington, Western Port, Montrose and Chelsea along with others could be apart of what could be a very exiting season for 2007.

Future Brighter for Endeavour Sporting

Endeavour Sporting will be enjoying new club rooms to be built costing \$100000 some stage next season, that will hopefully help the club to grow and gain a stronger long term future. But in the meantime they will also have lights erected and if my memory serves me correctly during the off season costing \$25000.

Katsa's Korner



13/26 Declared

7/22

3/3

One week is a very long time in Soccer.

Just ask "Goal-a-Game" Arnie who before the recent Socceroos match against Kuwait popped his wee hand up for the top job. On the plane he got for the long trip, only to suffer a very, very, very sad end with the Socceroos losing 2-0.

Arnie, do you still feel that you're up for the Gig?

State League Play-Offs

Saturday saw the match between Southern Stars and Keilor Park for the State League promotion playoff. Frankie McGrellis' boys came out victors, winning the Westgate Bridge Cup, 2-1 in extra time.

They now go on to play Bentleigh Greens next Saturday at Port Melbourne's ground. This game is also

sponsored by the Westgate Bridge as the winner will play in State 1 Next year, the loser in State 2, the loser may want to visit the famous Melbourne Bridge after the game.

The highlight of the Southern Stars and Keilor Park match was the great atmosphere that the Southern Stars fans created during the match, with their chanting, drums and they really got behind their team.

At the conclusion of the match, it was like the Southern Stars boys had won the Grand Final, remember one thing though boys and Frankie, the job is not yet done. The real celebrations cannot take place until you achieve a happy end next week against the Greens. Good luck to both sides, and may the better team win!

Investigative Journalism

I bumped into my old team mate George Stoggianou at the match where he was covering the match for Goal Weekly. After congratulating him for his great article on the Katsakis-Kingston divorce, I issued him with another challenge and that is to do a one on one, no holds barred interview with FFV CEO, Tony Pignatta. George was shaken and stirred and suggested that maybe I should be the one to cover this one. Stogy, this ones all yours, I await the outcome.

Vodafone Cup Grand Final

Sad ends now confirmed for 12 VPL Clubs who's seasons are now over, one more sad end to go with the VPL Grand Final being played next week between South Melbourne and Altona Magic.

I will be at the Game and will be looking to keep out of Rin Tin Tin's and Kujo's way, as well as any other four legged creature that the Security Company choses to employ on the day. Fourth official for this game, remember the old Sting Classic "Every Step you take, Every Breath you make, I'll be watching you!"

Let's hope that every Soccer Fan gets behind this great

game, and more importantly, support your team, and let's not provide the Daily Papers with any ammunition to write about violence at soccer matches. Speaking of daily papers, it's great to see the Herald Sun covering the VPL Finals Series. Their timing however, is about as usual as an ash tray on a motor bike, as these stories appear in Thursdays edition, four days after the event.

Melbourne Victory

Ernie, the eyes of Victoria are now upon you even more as with all Victorian Leagues now completed all eyes will be on the Melbourne Victory. Best of luck Ernie and make sure that your assistant's lap top's battery is fully charged for the year. He may miss an important stat!

Annual General Meetings

With all Leagues now finished, with the exception of the VPL, clubs will now be sending out letters to their members advising them of upcoming Annual General Meetings.

Now there are two kinds of AGM's.

The first in one that lasts about half an hour, the members congratulate the Committee for their great work, and give them the nod to continue next year.

The other type of AGM, and the most common, is when the Members maul the living daylights out of the club's powerbrokers, wanting answers to poor performances both on and off the ground.

At these AGM's, people are asked to join committees. For those thinking about taking the plunge, I have put together a Katsa's Survival Kit. Its contents will assist you in getting you through the year in one piece, and for those that get injured along the way, hopefully they will help you with your recovery.

KATSAS SURVIVAL KIT - EVERY GOOD COMMITTEE MEMBER SHOULD HAVE ONE

Johnny Walker Scotch - Allow for at least four dozen bottles for the year

Winfield Cigarettes- If you currently don't smoke, you will soon take the habit up

Grecian 2000- Black Hair soon turns to grey when you get involved in the running of a Club

Regain - Avoid using Combs during the year, your hair will fall out!

Mylanta- Will assist with heartburn

Frank Sinatra Cd - Featuring the classics "I Did It My Way" and "Strangers in the Night", both these songs will actually mean something to you by the end of the year.

Valium Milkshakes- Will take the edge out of all those sleepless nights.

Panel Beaters Voucher - To take all the dent marks out of your backs.

Westgate Bridge Pass - For when it gets all too hard

This Kit is also available and useful to Coaches!

Until next week...

This is Katsa, but not as you've known him, and when the Fat Lady sings, I hope that your team is the winner!

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Tribute To Boutsis

Con Boutsianis, one of the most colourful figures in Australian football, was born in December 1971. Emerging from junior ranks to the old State League in 1988 with Caulfield City, he played his early senior games alongside the like of David "The Music Man" Brooks, Paul Harris, Danny Zemunik, Ang Goutzioulis and Aki Alagiozidis. He would go on to win NSL Championships, play for the Socceroos and earn a reputation as being amongst the best dead-ball specialists the country has ever produced.

He started his senior NSL career for South Melbourne by scoring on debut at Middle Park on July 17, 1989. The 1-1 draw with St George was to be his only senior run for the season. In the team that day were the likes of Bruce MacLaren, Steve Blair, Peter Tsolakakis, Mike Petersen, Angie Postecoglou, Paul Trimboli, Danny Wright and a young Dean Fak.

The next season he scored four goals from 17 appearances. In that 1990-91 campaign South finished second on the league table to Melbourne Croatia before beating that side in a penalty shoot-out in a famous Grand Final at Olympic Park. By the end of the 1991-92 campaign he had netted his tenth goal for the blue and whites, from just 20 games. The club had finished third on the table and was beaten in the Preliminary

Final 2-0 by eventual champions Adelaide City. The goals continued to flow, a dozen from 26 starts in 1992-93 as he began to etch his name in Hellenic folklore. Over the next two seasons came another 18 goals in 45 matches.

In 1996 he played 14 games for Heidelberg United in the Victorian Premier League during the NSL off-season, a precursor to a move to Collingwood Warriors who had been admitted into the NSL for the 1996-97 season. In the pre-season NSL League Cup he scored the only goal in the final as the Warriors defeated Marconi. Con netted 7 goals from 20 games before the Collingwood outfit folded at the end of their only season. A short stint in the VPL with Bentleigh Greens saw him score twice from six games before a return to South Melbourne.

His second spell with South Melbourne saw him score 7 goals from his 26 games. Finishing on top of the table at the end of the regular season, he was part of another NSL Championship when he came off the bench scored and scored an eighty-seventh minute winner as South defeated Carlton 2-1 in the Grand Final.

He was on soon on the move again. Legal dramas from an involvement in a robbery at the Shark Fin restaurant saw him make a new start by joining emerging NSL powerhouse Perth Glory. He managed 12 goals

from 28 appearances in 1998-99, before scoring 13 times from 21 games a year later. In his first year at Glory the club finished third on the table but was beaten 2-1 by Sydney United in the Preliminary Final despite his late goal. The following year they headed the table, but missed his presence in the finals series after he signed for English club Bolton Wanderers and were beaten on penalties by Wollongong City in a memorable Grand Final. He failed to make a first team appearance at Bolton, and returned to the NSL and South Melbourne once again. In 2000-01 he scored 14 goals from 30 games as South clinched the Minor Premiership by eight points. Reaching the Grand Final, South Melbourne were beaten 2-1 by Wollongong

Wollongong City at Sydney's Parramatta Stadium. Con became embroiled in drama at the start of the 2001-02 NSL season when an aborted spell with New Zealand NSL side Football Kingz saw him leave and return to South Melbourne without playing a game. He scored 10 goals from 18 games over the next two seasons, followed by a stint back at Heidelberg United in the Victorian State League Division One in 2003. Another return to a former club followed as Con joined Heidelberg United for the 2005 VPL season. Mid-season saw a move to Bulleen Zebras before semi-retiring at season's end. In 2006 an injury crisis saw Oakleigh Cannons pick him up, and the side finished at the top of the table before elimination from the finals after two straight losses.

On April 9, 2001 he was called into the Australian squad for a World Cup quali-

By Mark Boric
Photos by John Punshon



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